

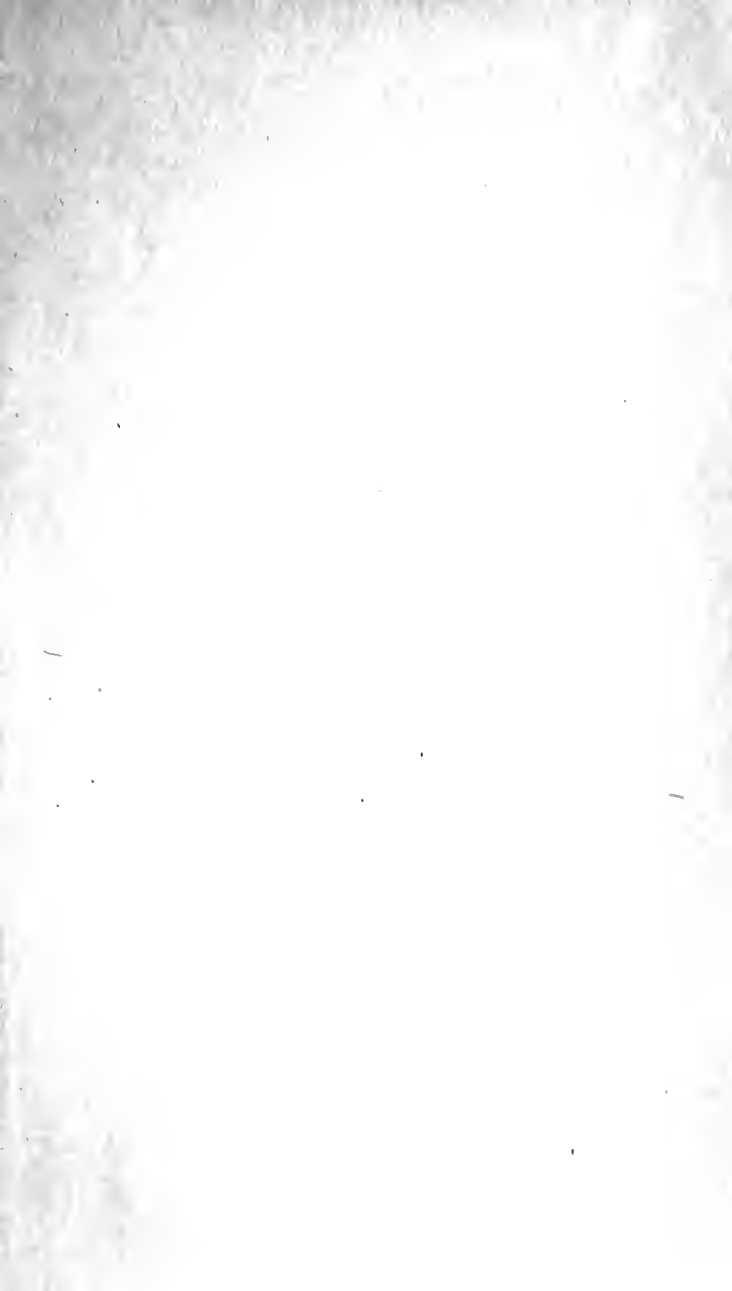




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Stretching out her hands to me, and with a little moan, she said:  
“Take me to him.” Page 83.

—*Black Rock.*



Connor, Ralph

president of C. W. ...

Black Rock.

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## BLACK ROCK.

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THE story of the book is true, and chief of the failures in the making of the book is this, that it is not all the truth. The light is not bright enough, the shadow is not black enough to give a true picture of that bit of Western life of which the writer was some small part. The men of the book are still there in the mines and lumber camps of the mountains, fighting out that eternal fight for manhood, strong, clean, God-conquered. And when the west winds blow, to the open ear the sounds of battle come, telling the fortunes of the fight.

Because a man's life is all he has, and because the only hope of the brave young West lies in its men, this story is told. It may be that the tragic pity of a broken life may move some to pray, and that that divine power there is in a single brave heart to summon forth hope and courage may move some to fight. If so, the tale is not told in vain.

C. W. G.



## INTRODUCTION.

---

I THINK have met "Ralph Connor." Indeed, I am sure I have—once in a canoe on the Red River, once on the Assinaboine, and twice or thrice on the prairies to the west. That was not the name he gave me, but, if I am right, it covers one of the most honest and genial of the strong characters that are fighting the devil and doing good work for men all over the world. He has seen with his own eyes the life which he describes in this book, and has himself, for some years of hard and lonely toil, assisted in the good influences which he traces among its wild and often hopeless conditions. He writes with the freshness and accuracy of an eyewitness, with the style (as I think his readers will allow) of a real artist, and with the tenderness and hopefulness of a man not only of faith, but of experience, who has seen in fulfilment the ideal for which he lives.

The life to which he takes us, though far off and very strange to our tame minds, is the life of

our brothers. Into the Northwest of Canada the young men of Great Britain and Ireland have been pouring (I was told), sometimes at the rate of forty-eight thousand a year. Our brothers who left home yesterday—our hearts cannot but follow them. With these pages Ralph Connor enables our eyes and our minds to follow, too; nor do I think there is any one who shall read this book and not find also that his conscience is quickened. There is a warfare appointed unto man upon earth, and its struggles are nowhere more intense, nor the victories of the strong nor the succors brought to the fallen more heroic, than on the fields described in this volume.

GEORGE ADAM SMITH.

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# BLACK ROCK.

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CHAPTER I.

## CHRISTMAS EVE IN A LUMBER CAMP.

IT was due to a mysterious dispensation of Providence and a good deal to Leslie Graeme that I found myself in the heart of the Selkirks for my Christmas eve as the year 1882 was dying. It had been my plan to spend my Christmas far away in Toronto, with such bohemian and boon companions as could be found in that cosmopolitan and kindly city. But Leslie Graeme changed all that, for, discovering me in the village of Black Rock, with my traps all packed, waiting for the stage to start for the Landing, thirty miles away, he bore down upon me with irresistible force, and I found myself recovering from my surprise only after we had gone in his lumber sleigh some six miles on our way to his camp up in the mountains. I was surprised and much

delighted, though I would not allow him to think so, to find that his old-time power over me was still there. He could always in the old 'varsity days—dear, wild days—make me do what he liked. He was so handsome and so reckless, brilliant in his class work, and the prince of half-backs on the Rugby field, and with such power of fascination as would “extract the heart out of a wheelbarrow,” as Barney Lundy used to say. And thus it was that I found myself just three weeks later—I was to have spent two or three days—on the afternoon of December 24, standing in Graeme's Lumber Camp No. 2, wondering at myself. But I did not regret my changed plans, for in those three weeks I had raided a cinnamon bear's den and had wakened up a grizzly—— But I shall let the grizzly finish the tale; he probably sees more humor in it than I.

The camp stood in a little clearing, and consisted of a group of three long, low shanties with smaller shacks near them, all built of heavy, un-hewn logs, with door and window in each. The grub camp, with cook-shed attached, stood in the middle of the clearing; at a little distance was the sleeping camp with the office built against it, and about a hundred yards away on the other side of the clearing stood the stables, and near them the smiddy. The mountains rose grandly on

every side, throwing up their great peaks into the sky. The clearing in which the camp stood was hewn out of a dense pine forest that filled the valley and climbed half way up the mountain sides and then frayed out in scattered and stunted trees.

It was one of those wonderful Canadian winter days, bright, and with a touch of sharpness in the air that did not chill, but warmed the blood like draughts of wine. The men were up in the woods, and the shrill scream of the bluejay flashing across the open, the impudent chatter of the red squirrel from the top of the grub camp, and the pert chirp of the whisky-jack, hopping about on the rubbish-heap, with the long, lone cry of the wolf far down the valley, only made the silence felt the more.

As I stood drinking in with all my soul the glorious beauty and the silence of mountain and forest, with the Christmas feeling stealing into me, Graeme came out from his office, and, catching sight of me, called out: "Glorious Christmas weather, old chap!" And then, coming nearer: "Must you go to-morrow?"

"I fear so," I replied, knowing well that the Christmas feeling was on him too.

"I wish I were going with you," he said quietly.

I turned eagerly to persuade him, but at the look of suffering in his face the words died at my lips, for we both were thinking of the awful night of horror when all his bright, brilliant life crashed down about him in black ruin and shame. I could only throw my arm over his shoulder and stand silent beside him. A sudden jingle of bells roused him, and, giving himself a little shake, he exclaimed: "There are the boys coming home."

Soon the camp was filled with men talking, laughing, chaffing like light-hearted boys.

"They are a little wild to-night," said Graeme, "and to-morrow they'll paint Black Rock red."

Before many minutes had gone the last teamster was "washed up," and all were standing about waiting impatiently for the cook's signal—the supper to-night was to be "something of a feed"—when the sound of bells drew their attention to a light sleigh drawn by a buckskin broncho coming down the hillside at a great pace.

"The preacher, I'll bet, by his driving," said one of the men.

"Bedad, and it's him has the foine nose for turkey!" said Blaney, a good-natured, jovial Irishman.

"Yes, or for pay-day, more like," said Keefe, a black-browed, villainous fellow-countryman of Blaney's and, strange to say, his great friend.

Big Sandy McNaughton, a Canadian Highlander from Glengarry, rose up in wrath.

“Bill Keefe,” said he with deliberate emphasis, “you’ll just keep your dirty tongue off the minister; and as for your pay, it’s little he sees of it, or any one else except Mike Slavin, when you’s too dry to wait for some one to treat you, or perhaps Father Ryan, when the fear of hell-fire is on you.”

The men stood amazed at Sandy’s sudden anger and length of speech.

“*Bon.* Dat’s good for you, my bully boy,” said Baptiste, a wiry little French-Canadian, Sandy’s sworn ally and devoted admirer ever since the day when the big Scotsman, under great provocation, had knocked him clean off the dump into the river and then jumped in for him.

It was not till afterward I learned the cause of Sandy’s sudden wrath which urged him to such unwonted length of speech. It was not simply that the Presbyterian blood carried with it reverence for the minister and contempt for Papists and Fenians, but that he had a vivid remembrance of how, only a month ago, the minister had got him out of Mike Slavin’s saloon and out of the clutches of Keefe and Slavin and their gang of blood-suckers.

Keefe started up with a curse. Baptiste sprang

to Sandy's side, slapped him on the back, and called out:

"You keel him, I'll hit [eat] him up, me."

It looked as if there might be a fight, when a harsh voice said in a low, savage tone:

"Stop your row, you blank fools; settle it, if you want to, somewhere else."

I turned, and was amazed to see old man Nelson, who was very seldom moved to speech.

There was a look of scorn on his hard, iron-gray face, and of such settled fierceness as made me quite believe the tales I had heard of his deadly fights in the mines at the coast. Before any reply could be made the minister drove up and called out in a cheery voice:

"Merry Christmas, boys! Hello, Sandy! *Comment ça va*, Baptiste? How do you do, Mr. Graeme?"

"First rate. Let me introduce my friend, Mr. Connor, sometime medical student, now artist, hunter, and tramp at large, but not a bad sort."

"A man to be envied," said the minister, smiling. "I am glad to know any friend of Mr. Graeme's."

I liked Mr. Craig from the first. He had good eyes that looked straight out at you, a clean-cut, strong face well set on his shoulders, and altogether an upstanding, manly bearing. He insisted

on going with Sandy to the stables to see Dandy, his broncho, put up.

“Decent fellow,” said Graeme; “but though he is good enough to his broncho, it is Sandy that’s in his mind now.”

“Does he come out often? I mean, are you part of his parish, so to speak?”

“I have no doubt he thinks so; and I’m blowed if he doesn’t make the Presbyterians of us think so too.” And he added after a pause: “A dandy lot of parishioners we are for any man. There’s Sandy, now, he would knock Keefe’s head off as a kind off religious exercise; but to-morrow Keefe will be sober and Sandy will be drunk as a lord, and the drunker he is the better Presbyterian he’ll be, to the preacher’s disgust.” Then after another pause he added bitterly: “But it is not for me to throw rocks at Sandy. I am not the same kind of fool, but I am a fool of several other sorts.”

Then the cook came out and beat a tattoo on the bottom of a dish-pan. Baptiste answered with a yell. But though keenly hungry, no man would demean himself to do other than walk with apparent reluctance to his place at the table. At the further end of the camp was a big fireplace, and from the door to the fireplace extended the long board tables, covered with platters of turkey

not too scientifically carved, dishes of potatoes, bowls of apple sauce, plates of butter, pies, and smaller dishes distributed at regular intervals. Two lanterns hanging from the roof and a row of candles stuck into the wall on either side by means of slit sticks cast a dim, weird light over the scene.

There was a moment's silence, and at a nod from Graeme Mr. Craig rose and said :

"I don't know how you feel about it, men, but to me this looks good enough to be thankful for."

"Fire ahead, sir," called out a voice quite respectfully, and the minister bent his head and said :

"For Christ the Lord who came to save us, for all the love and goodness we have known, and for these Thy gifts to us this Christmas night, our Father, make us thankful. Amen."

"*Bon.* Dat's fuss rate," said Baptiste. "Seems lak dat's make me hit [eat] more better for sure." And then no word was spoken for a quarter of an hour. The occasion was far too solemn and moments too precious for anything so empty as words. But when the white piles of bread and the brown piles of turkey had for a second time vanished, and after the last pie had disappeared, there came a pause and a hush of expectancy, whereupon the cook and cookee, each bearing aloft a huge, blazing pudding, came forth.



“Hooray!” yelled Blaney; “up wid yez!” and grabbing the cook by the shoulders from behind, he faced him about.

Mr. Craig was the first to respond, and seizing the cookee in the same way called out: “Squad, fall in! quick march!” In a moment every man was in the procession.

“Strike up, Batchees, ye little angel!” shouted Blaney, the appellation a concession to the minister’s presence; and away went Baptiste in a rollicking French song with the English chorus—

“Then blow, ye winds, in the morning,  
Blow, ye winds, ay oh!  
Blow, ye winds, in the morning,  
Blow, blow, blow.”

And at each “blow” every boot came down with a thump on the plank floor that shook the solid roof. After the second round Mr. Craig jumped upon the bench and called out:

“Three cheers for Billy the cook!”

In the silence following the cheers Baptiste was heard to say:

“*Bon!* Dat’s mak me feel lak hit dat pud-din’ all hup meself, me.”

“Hear till the little baste!” said Blaney in disgust.

“Batchees,” remonstrated Sandy gravely, “ye’ve more stomach than manners.”

“Fu sure! but de more stomach, dat’s more better for dis puddin’,” replied the little Frenchman cheerfully.

After a time the tables were cleared and pushed back to the wall and pipes were produced. In all attitudes suggestive of comfort the men disposed themselves in a wide circle about the fire, which now roared and crackled up the great wooden chimney hanging from the roof. The lumberman’s hour of bliss had arrived. Even old man Nelson looked a shade less melancholy than usual as he sat alone, well away from the fire, smoking steadily and silently. When the second pipes were well a-going one of the men took down a violin from the wall and handed it to Lachlan Campbell. There were two brothers Campbell just out from Argyll, typical Highlanders: Lachlan, dark, silent, melancholy, with the face of a mystic, and Angus, red-haired, quick, impulsive, and devoted to his brother, a devotion he thought proper to cover under biting, sarcastic speech.

Lachlan, after much protestation, interposed with gibes from his brother, took the violin, and in response to the call from all sides struck up “Lord Macdonald’s Reel.” In a moment the floor was filled with dancers, whooping and cracking their fingers in the wildest manner.

Then Baptiste did the "Red River Jig," a most intricate and difficult series of steps, the men keeping time to the music with hands and feet.

When the jig was finished Sandy called for "Lochaber No More," but Campbell said :

"No! no! I cannot play that to-night. Mr. Craig will play."

Craig took the violin, and at the first note I knew he was no ordinary player. I did not recognize the music, but it was soft and thrilling, and got in by the heart till every one was thinking his tenderest and saddest thoughts.

After he had played two or three exquisite bits he gave Campbell his violin, saying, "Now, 'Lochaber,' Lachlan."

Without a word Lachlan began, not "Lochaber"—he was not ready for that yet—but "The Flowers o' the Forest," and from that wandered through "Auld Robin Gray" and "The Land o' the Leal," and so got at last to that most soul-subduing of Scottish laments, "Lochaber No More." At the first strain his brother, who had thrown himself on some blankets behind the fire, turned over on his face feigning sleep. Sandy M'Naughton took his pipe out of his mouth and sat up straight and stiff, staring into vacancy, and Graeme, beyond the fire, drew a short, sharp breath. We had often sat, Graeme and I, in our

student days, in the drawing-room at home, listening to his father wailing out "Lochaber" upon the pipes, and I well knew that the awful minor strains were now eating their way into his soul.

Over and over again the Highlander played his lament. He had long since forgotten us, and was seeing visions of the hills and lochs and glens of his far-away native land, and making us, too, see strange things out of the dim past. I glanced at old man Nelson, and was startled at the eager, almost piteous look in his eyes, and I wished Campbell would stop. Mr. Craig caught my eye, and stepping over to Campbell held out his hand for the violin. Lingeringly and lovingly the Highlander drew out the last strain and silently gave the minister his instrument.

Without a moment's pause, and while the spell of "Lochaber" was still upon us, the minister, with exquisite skill, fell into the refrain of that simple and beautiful camp-meeting hymn, "The Sweet By-and-By." After playing the verse through once he sang softly the refrain. After the first verse the men joined in the chorus; at first timidly, but by the time the third verse was reached they were shouting with throats full open, "We shall meet on that beautiful shore." When I looked at Nelson the eager light had gone out of his eyes, and in its place was a kind of deter-

mined hopelessness, as if in this new music he had no part.

After the voices had ceased Mr. Craig played again the refrain, more and more softly and slowly; then laying the violin on Campbell's knees, he drew from his pocket his little Bible and said:

“Men, with Mr. Graeme's permission I want to read you something this Christmas eve. You will all have heard it before, but you will like it none the less for that.”

His voice was soft, but clear and penetrating, as he read the eternal story of the angels and the shepherds and the Babe. And as he read, a slight motion of the hand or a glance of an eye made us see, as he was seeing, that whole radiant drama. The wonder, the timid joy, the tenderness, the mystery of it all, were borne in upon us with overpowering effect. He closed the book, and in the same low, clear voice went on to tell us how, in his home years ago, he used to stand on Christmas eve listening in thrilling delight to his mother telling him the story, and how she used to make him see the shepherds and hear the sheep bleating near by, and how the sudden burst of glory used to make his heart jump.

“I used to be a little afraid of the angels, because a boy told me they were ghosts; but my mother told me better, and I didn't fear them any

more. And the Baby, the dear little Baby—we all love a baby.” There was a quick, dry sob; it was from Nelson. “I used to peek through under to see the little one in the straw, and wonder what things swaddling clothes were. Oh, it was so real and so beautiful!” He paused, and I could hear the men breathing.

“But one Christmas eve,” he went on in a lower, sweeter tone, “there was no one to tell me the story, and I grew to forget it and went away to college, and learned to think that it was only a child’s tale and was not for men. Then bad days came to me and worse, and I began to lose my grip of myself, of life, of hope, of goodness, till one black Christmas, in the slums of a far-away city, when I had given up all and the devil’s arms were about me, I heard the story again. And as I listened, with a bitter ache in my heart—for I had put it all behind me—I suddenly found myself peeking under the shepherds’ arms with a child’s wonder at the Baby in the straw. Then it came over me like great waves that His name was Jesus, because it was He that should save men from their sins. Save! Save! The waves kept beating upon my ears, and before I knew I had called out, ‘Oh! can He save me?’ It was in a little mission meeting on one of the side streets, and they seemed to be used to that

sort of thing there, for no one was surprised ; and a young fellow leaned across the aisle to me and said : ‘ Why, you just bet He can ! ’ His surprise that I should doubt, his bright face and confident tone, gave me hope that perhaps it might be so. I held to that hope with all my soul, and”—stretching up his arms, and with a quick glow in his face and a little break in his voice—“ He hasn’t failed me yet ; not once, not once ! ”

He stopped quite short, and I felt a good deal like making a fool of myself, for in those days I had not made up my mind about these things. Graeme, poor old chap, was gazing at him with a sad yearning in his dark eyes ; big Sandy was sitting very stiff and staring harder than ever into the fire ; Baptiste was trembling with excitement ; Blaney was openly wiping the tears away. But the face that held my eyes was that of old man Nelson. It was white, fierce, hungry-looking, his sunken eyes burning, his lips parted as if to cry. The minister went on.

“ I didn’t mean to tell you this, men ; it all came over me with a rush ; but it is true, every word, and not a word will I take back. And, what’s more, I can tell you this : what He did for me He can do for any man, and it doesn’t make any difference what’s behind him, and”—leaning slightly forward, and with a little thrill of pathos

vibrating in his voice—"oh, boys, why don't you give Him a chance at you? Without Him you'll never be the men you want to be, and you'll never get the better of that that's keeping some of you now from going back home. You know you'll never go back till you're the men you want to be." Then, lifting up his face and throwing back his head, he said, as if to himself, "Jesus! He shall save His people from their sins," and then, "Let us pray."

Graeme leaned forward with his face in his hands; Baptiste and Blaney dropped on their knees; Sandy, the Campbells, and some others stood up. Old man Nelson held his eye steadily on the minister.

Only once before had I seen that look on a human face. A young fellow had broken through the ice on the river at home, and as the black water was dragging his fingers one by one from the slippery edges, there came over his face that same look. I used to wake up for many a night after in a sweat of horror, seeing the white face with its parting lips and its piteous, dumb appeal, and the black water slowly sucking it down.

Nelson's face brought it all back; but during the prayer the face changed and seemed to settle into resolve of some sort, stern, almost gloomy, as of a man with his last chance before him.



After the prayer Mr. Craig invited the men to a Christmas dinner next day in Black Rock. "And because you are an independent lot, we'll charge you half a dollar for dinner and the evening show." Then leaving a bundle of magazines and illustrated papers on the table—a godsend to the men—he said good-by and went out.

I was to go with the minister, so I jumped into the sleigh first and waited while he said good-by to Graeme, who had been hard hit by the whole service and seemed to want to say something. I heard Mr. Craig say cheerfully and confidentially: "It's a true bill: try Him."

Sandy, who had been steadying Dandy while that interesting broncho was attempting with great success to balance himself on his hind legs, came to say good-by.

"Come and see me first thing, Sandy."

"Aye! I know; I'll see ye, Mr. Craig," said Sandy earnestly as Dandy dashed off at a full gallop across the clearing and over the bridge, steadying down when he reached the hill.

"Steady, you idiot!"

This was to Dandy, who had taken a sudden side spring into the deep snow, almost upsetting us. A man stepped out from the shadow. It was old man Nelson. He came straight to the

sleigh and, ignoring my presence completely, said :

“ Mr. Craig, are you dead sure of this? Will it work ? ”

“ Do you mean,” said Craig, taking him up promptly, “ can Jesus Christ save you from your sins and make a man of you ? ”

The old man nodded, keeping his hungry eyes on the other’s face.

“ Well, here’s His message to you : ‘ The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. ’ ”

“ To me? To me? ” said the old man eagerly.

“ Listen ; this, too, is His word : ‘ Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out. ’ That’s for you, for here you are, coming. ”

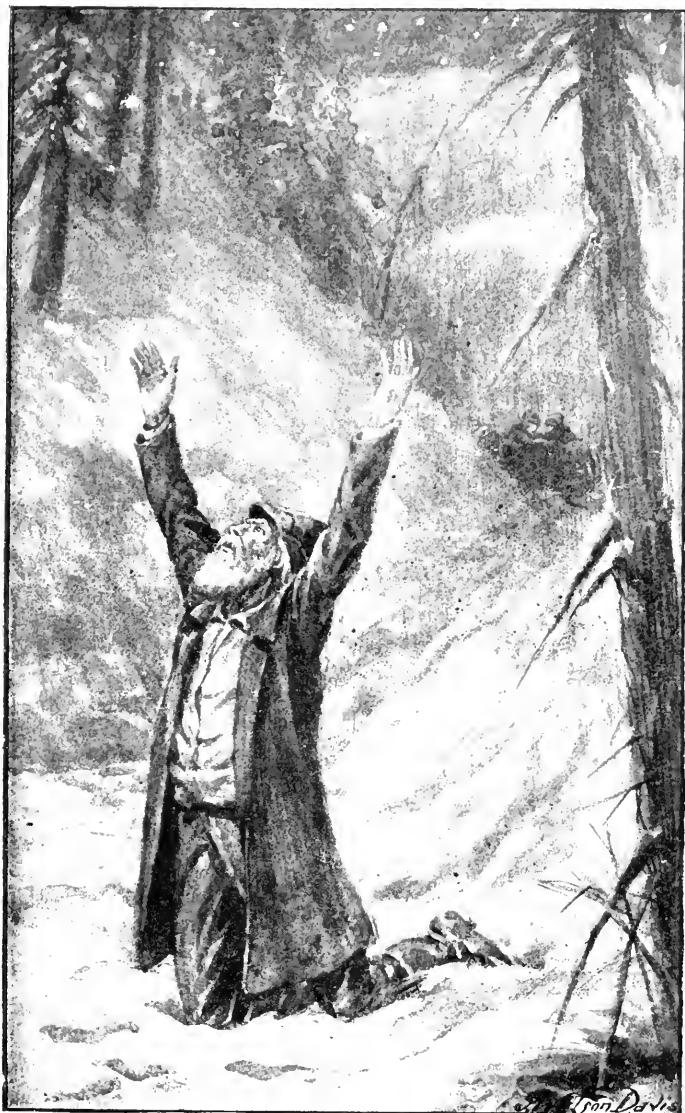
“ You don’t know me, Mr. Craig. I left my baby fifteen years ago because—— ”

“ Stop! ” said the minister. “ Don’t tell me, at least not to-night ; perhaps never. Tell Him who knows it all now and who never betrays a secret. Have it out with Him. Don’t be afraid to trust Him. ”

Nelson looked at him, with his face quivering, and said in a husky voice :

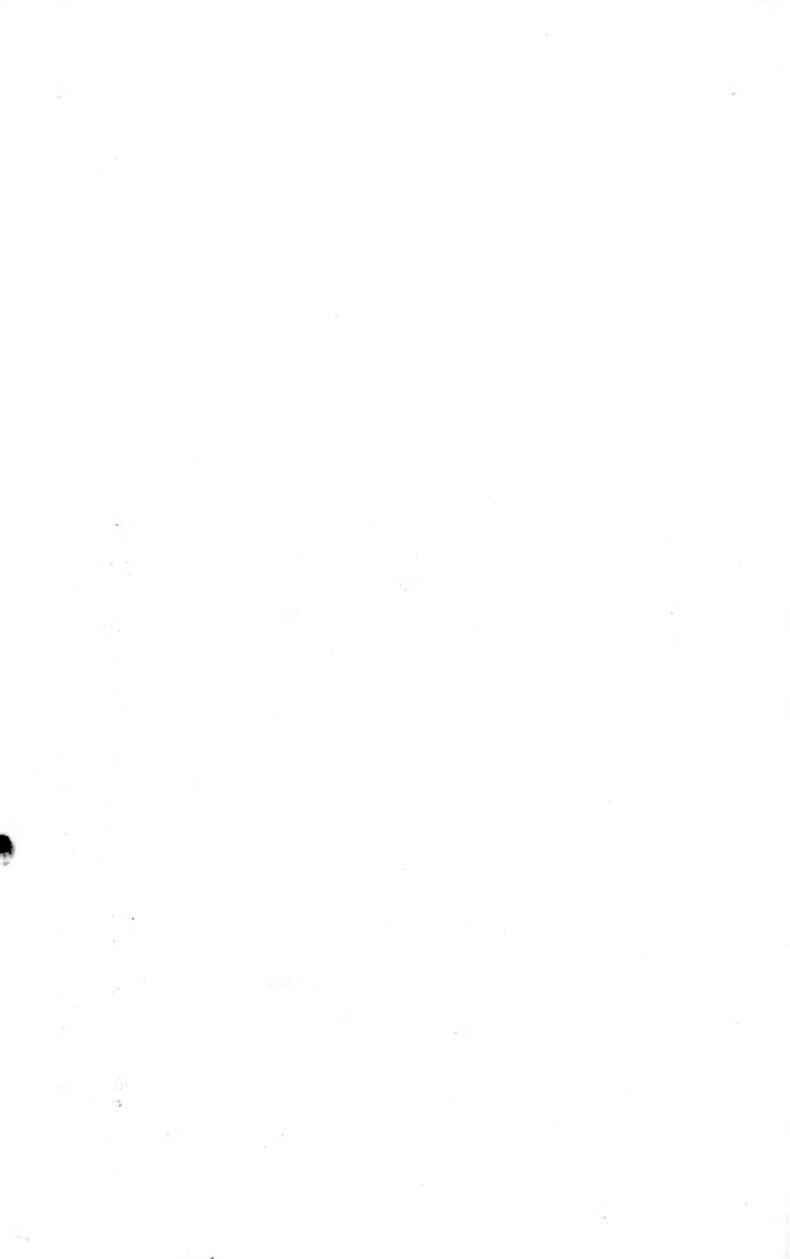
“ If this is no good, it’s hell for me. ”

“ If it is no good,” replied Craig almost sternly, “ it’s hell for all of us. ”



I looked back and saw what brought a lump in my throat; it was old man Nelson on his knees in the snow, with his hands spread upward to the stars.—  
Page 27.

*Black Rock*



The old man straightened himself up, looked up at the stars, then back at Mr. Craig, then at me, and drawing a deep breath said :

“I'll try Him.” As he was turning away the minister touched him on the arm and said quietly :

“Keep an eye on Sandy to-morrow.”

Nelson nodded and we went on ; but before we took the next turn I looked back and saw what brought a lump into my throat. It was old man Nelson on his knees in the snow, with his hands spread upward to the stars, and I wondered if there was any One above the stars and nearer than the stars who could see. And then the trees hid him from my sight.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE BLACK ROCK CHRISTMAS.

MANY strange Christmas Days have I seen, but that wild Black Rock Christmas stands out strangest of all. While I was reveling in my delicious second morning sleep, just awake enough to enjoy it, Mr. Craig came abruptly, announcing breakfast and adding:

“Hope you are in good shape, for we have our work before us this day.”

“Hello!” I replied, still half asleep and anxious to hide from the minister that I was trying to gain a few more moments of snoozing delight, “what’s abroad?”

“The devil,” he answered shortly, and with such emphasis that I sat bolt upright, looking anxiously about.

“Oh! no need for alarm. He’s not after you particularly—at least not to-day,” said Craig, with a shadow of a smile. “But he is going about in good style, I can tell you.”

By this time I was quite awake.

“Well, what particular style does his majesty affect this morning?”

He pulled out a show-bill.

“Peculiarly gaudy and effective, is it not?”

The items announced were sufficiently attractive. The 'Frisco Opera Company were to produce the “screaming farce,” “The Gay and Giddy Dude;” after which there was to be a “Grand Ball,” during which the “Kalifornia Female Kickers” were to do some fancy figures; the whole to be followed by a “big supper” with “two free drinks to every man and one to the lady,” and all for the insignificant sum of two dollars.

“Can't you go one better?” I said.

He looked inquiringly and a little disgustedly at me.

“What can you do against free drinks and a dance, not to speak of the ‘High Kickers’?” he groaned. “No!” he continued; “it's a clean beat for us to-day. The miners and lumbermen will have in their pockets ten thousand dollars, and every dollar burning a hole; and Slavin and his gang will get most of it. But,” he added, “you must have breakfast. You'll find a tub in the kitchen; don't be afraid to splash. It is the best I have to offer you.”

The tub sounded inviting, and before many

minutes had passed I was in a delightful glow, the effect of cold water and a rough towel, and that consciousness of virtue that comes to a man who has had courage to face his cold bath on a winter morning.

The breakfast was laid with fine taste. A diminutive pine tree, in a pot hung round with wintergreen, stood in the center of the table.

“Well, now, this looks good; porridge, beef-steak, potatoes, toast, and marmalade.”

“I hope you will enjoy it all.”

There was not much talk over our meal. Mr. Craig was evidently preoccupied and as blue as his politeness would allow him. Slavin's victory weighed upon his spirits. Finally he burst out:

“Look here! I can't, I won't stand it; something must be done. Last Christmas this town was for two weeks, as one of the miners said, ‘a little suburb of hell.’ It was something too awful. And at the end of it all one young fellow was found dead in his shack, and twenty or more crawled back to the camps, leaving their three months' pay with Slavin and his suckers. I won't stand it, I say.” He turned fiercely on me. “What's to be done?”

This rather took me aback, for I had troubled myself with nothing of this sort in my life before, being fully occupied in keeping myself out of



difficulty and allowing others the same privilege. So I ventured the consolation that he had done his part, and that a spree more or less would not make much difference to these men. But the next moment I wished I had been slower in speech, for he swiftly faced me, and his words came like a torrent.

“God forgive you that heartless word! Do you know—— But no; you don’t know what you are saying. You don’t know that these men have been clambering for dear life out of a fearful pit for three months past, and doing good climbing, too, poor chaps. You don’t think that some of them have wives, most of them mothers and sisters, in the East or across the sea, for whose sake they are slaving here; the miners hoping to save enough to bring their families to this homeless place, the rest to make enough to go back with credit. Why, there’s Nixon, miner, splendid chap; has been here for two years and drawing the highest pay. Twice he has been in sight of his heaven, for he can’t speak of his wife and babies without breaking up, and twice that slick son of the devil—that’s Scripture, mind you—Slavin, got him and ‘rolled’ him, as the boys say. He went back to the mines broken in body and in heart. He says this is his third and last chance. If Slavin gets him, his wife and babies

will never see him on earth or in heaven. There is Sandy, too, and the rest. And," he added in a lower tone, and with a curious little thrill of pathos in his voice, "this is the day the Saviour came to the world." He paused, and then with a little sad smile: "But I don't want to abuse you."

"Do. I enjoy it. I'm a beast, a selfish beast," for somehow his intense, blazing earnestness made me feel uncomfortably small. "What have we to offer?" I demanded.

"Wait till I have got these things cleared away and my housekeeping done."

I pressed my services upon him, somewhat feebly, I own, for I can't bear dish-water; but he rejected my offer.

"I don't like trusting my china to the hands of a tenderfoot."

"Quite right, though your china would prove an excellent means of defense at long range."

It was delf, a quarter of an inch thick. So I smoked while he washed up, swept, dusted, and arranged the room.

After the room was ordered to his taste we proceeded to hold council. He could offer dinner, magic lantern, music. "We can fill in time for two hours, but," he added gloomily, "we can't beat the dance and the 'High Kickers.'"

"Have you nothing new or startling?"

He shook his head.

“No kind of show? Dog show? Snake charmer?”

“Slavin has a monopoly of the snakes.” Then he added hesitatingly: “There was an old Punch-and-Judy chap here last year, but he died. Whisky again.”

“What happened to his show?”

“The Black Rock Hotel man took it for board and whisky bill. He has it still, I suppose.”

I did not much relish the business, but I hated to see him beaten, so I ventured:

“I have run a Punch-and-Judy in an amateur way at the 'varsity.”

He sprang to his feet with a yell.

“You have! You mean to say it? We've got them! We've beaten them!” He had an extraordinary way of taking your help for granted. “The miner chaps, mostly English and Welsh, went mad over the poor old showman, and made him so wealthy that in sheer gratitude he drank himself to death.”

He walked up and down in high excitement and in such evident delight that I felt pledged to my best effort.

“Well,” I said, “first the poster. We must beat them in that.”

He brought me large sheets of brown paper,

and after two hours' hard work I had half a dozen pictorial show-bills done in gorgeous colors and striking designs. They were good, if I do say it myself.

The turkey, the magic lantern, the Punch-and-Judy show were all there, the last with the crowd before it in gaping delight. A few explanatory words were thrown in, emphasizing the highly artistic nature of the Punch-and-Judy entertainment.

Craig was delighted, and proceeded to perfect his plans. He had some half a dozen young men, four young ladies, and eight or ten matrons upon whom he could depend for help. These he organized into a vigilance committee charged with the duty of preventing miners and lumbermen from getting away to Slavin's.

"The critical moments will be immediately before and after dinner, and then again after the show is over," he explained. "The first two crises must be left to the care of Punch and Judy, and as for the last, I am not yet sure what shall be done;" but I saw he had something in his head, for he added, "I shall see Mrs. Mavor."

"Who is Mrs. Mavor?" I asked.

But he made no reply. He was a born fighter, and he put the fighting spirit into us all. We were bound to win.

The sports were to begin at two o'clock. By lunch-time everything was in readiness. After lunch I was having a quiet smoke in Craig's shack when in he rushed, saying :

"The battle will be lost before it is fought. If we lose Quatre Bras we shall never get to Waterloo."

"What's up?"

"Slavin, just now. The miners are coming in, and he will have them in tow in half an hour."

He looked at me appealingly. I knew what he wanted.

"All right. I suppose I must, but it is an awful bore that a man can't have a quiet smoke."

"You're not half a bad fellow," he replied, smiling. "I shall get the ladies to furnish coffee inside the booth. You furnish them intellectual nourishment in front with dear old Punch and Judy."

He sent a boy with a bell round the village announcing, "Punch and Judy in front of the Christmas booth beside the church;" and for three-quarters of an hour I shrieked and sweated in that awful little pen. But it was almost worth it to hear the shouts of approval and laughter that greeted my performance. It was cold work standing about, so that the crowd was quite ready to respond when Punch, after being duly hanged,

came forward and invited all into the booth for the hot coffee which Judy had ordered.

In they trooped, and Quatre Bras was won.

No sooner were the miners safely engaged with their coffee than I heard a great noise of bells and of men shouting, and on reaching the street I saw that the men from the lumber camp were coming in. Two immense sleighs, decorated with ribbons and spruce boughs, each drawn by a four-horse team gaily adorned, filled with some fifty men, singing and shouting with all their might, were coming down the hill road at full gallop. Round the corner they swung, dashed at full speed across the bridge and down the street, and pulled up after they had made the circuit of a block, to the great admiration of the on-lookers. Among others Slavin sauntered up good-naturedly, making himself agreeable to Sandy and those who were helping to unhitch his team.

“Oh, you need not take trouble with me or my team, Mike Slavin. Batchees and me and the boys can look after them fine,” said Sandy coolly.

This rejecting of hospitality was perfectly understood by Slavin and by all.

“Dat’s too bad, heh?” said Baptiste wickedly; “and Sandy, he’s got good money on his pocket for sure, too.”

The boys laughed, and Slavin, joining in, turned away with Keefe and Blaney; but by the look in his eye I knew he was playing "Br'er Rabbit" and lying low.

Mr. Craig just then came up.

"Hello, boys! Too late for Punch and Judy, but just in time for hot coffee and doughnuts."

"*Bon.* Dat's fuss rate," said Baptiste heartily. "Where you keep him?"

"Up in the tent next the church there. The miners are all in."

"Ah, dat so? Dat's bad news for the shanty-men, heh, Sandy?" said the little Frenchman dolefully.

"There was a clothes-basket full of doughnuts and a boiler of coffee left as I passed just now," said Craig encouragingly.

"*Allons, mes garçons. Vite!* Never say keel!" cried Baptiste excitedly, stripping off the harness.

But Sandy would not leave the horses till they were carefully rubbed down, blanketed, and fed, for he was entered for the four-horse race and it behooved him to do his best to win. Besides, he scorned to hurry himself for anything so unimportant as eating; that he considered hardly worthy even of Baptiste. Mr. Craig managed to get a word with him before he went off, and I

saw Sandy solemnly and emphatically shake his head, saying, "Ah! we'll beat him this day," and I gathered that he was added to the vigilance committee.

Old man Nelson was busy with his own team. He turned slowly at Mr. Craig's greeting, "How is it, Nelson?" and it was with a very grave voice he answered: "I hardly know, sir; but I am not gone yet, though it seems little to hold to."

"All you want for a grip is what your hand can cover. What would you have? And besides, do you know why you are not gone yet?"

The old man waited, looking at the minister gravely.

"Because He hasn't let go His grip of you."

"How do you know He's gripped me?"

"Now, look here, Nelson, do you want to quit this thing and give it all up?"

"No! no! For Heaven's sake, no! Why, do you think I have lost it?" said Nelson, almost piteously.

"Well, He's keener about it than you; and I'll bet you haven't thought it worth while to thank Him."

"To thank Him," he repeated, almost stupidly, "for——"

"For keeping you where you are overnight," said Mr. Craig, almost sternly.



The old man gazed at the minister, a light growing in his eyes.

“You’re right. Thank God, you’re right.”

And then he turned quickly away and went into the stable behind his team. It was a minute before he came out. Over his face was a trembling joy.

“Can I do anything for you to-day?” he asked humbly.

“Indeed you just can,” said the minister, taking his hand and shaking it very warmly; and then he told him Slavin’s program and ours.

“Sandy is all right till after his race. After that is his time of danger,” said the minister.

“I’ll stay with him, sir,” said old Nelson, in the tone of a man taking a covenant, and immediately set off for the coffee tent.

“Here comes another recruit for your corps,” I said, pointing to Leslie Graeme, who was coming down the street at that moment in his light sleigh.

“I am not so sure. Do you think you could get him?”

I laughed.

“You are a good one.”

“Well,” he replied half defiantly, “is not this your fight too?”

“You make me think so, though I am bound

say I hardly recognize myself to-day. But here goes," and before I knew it I was describing our plans to Graeme, growing more and more enthusiastic as he sat in his sleigh, listening with a quizzical smile I didn't quite like.

"He's got you too," he said. "I feared so."

"Well," I laughed, "perhaps so. But I want to lick that man Slavin. I've just seen him, and he's just what Craig calls him, 'a slick son of the devil.' Don't be shocked; he says it is Scripture."

"Revised version," said Graeme gravely, while Craig looked a little abashed.

"What is assigned me, Mr. Craig? for I know that this man is simply your agent."

I repudiated the idea, while Mr. Craig said nothing.

"What's my part?" demanded Graeme.

"Well," said Mr. Craig hesitatingly, "of course I would do nothing till I had consulted you; but I want a man to take my place at the sports. I am referee."

"That's all right," said Graeme, with an air of relief. "I expected something hard."

"And then I thought you would not mind presiding at dinner—I want it to go off well."

"Did you notice that?" said Graeme to me. "Not a bad touch, eh?"

“That’s nothing to the way he touched me. Wait and learn,” I answered, while Craig looked quite distressed. “He’ll do it, Mr. Craig, never fear,” I said, “and any other little duty that may occur to you.”

“Now, that’s too bad of you. That is all I want, honor bright,” he replied; adding as he turned away: “You are just in time for a cup of coffee, Mr. Graeme. Now I must see Mrs. Mavor.”

“Who is Mrs. Mavor?” I demanded of Graeme.

“Mrs. Mavor? The miners’ guardian angel.”

We put up the horses and set off for coffee. As we approached the booth Graeme caught sight of the Punch-and-Judy show, stood still in amazement, and exclaimed: “Can the dead live?”

“Punch and Judy never die,” I replied solemnly.

“But the old manipulator is dead enough, poor old beggar!”

“But he left his mantle, as you see.”

He looked at me a moment.

“What! Do you mean you——”

“Yes, that is exactly what I do mean.”

“He is a great man, that Craig fellow—a truly great man.” And then he leaned up against a tree and laughed till the tears came. “I say

old boy, don't mind me," he gasped, "but do you remember the old 'varsity show?"

"Yes, you villain; and I remember your part in it. I wonder how you can, even at this remote date, laugh at it."

For I had a vivid recollection of how, after a "chaste and high artistic performance of this medieval play" had been given before a distinguished Toronto audience, the trap-door by which I had entered my box was fastened, and I was left to swelter in my cage and forced to listen to the suffocated laughter from the wings and the stage whispers of "Hello, Mr. Punch, where's the baby?" And for many a day after I was subjected to anxious inquiries as to the locality and health of "the baby," and whether it was able to be out.

"Oh, the dear old days!" he kept saying, over and over, in a tone so full of sadness that my heart grew sore for him and I forgave him, as many a time before.

The sports passed off in typical Western style. In addition to the usual running and leaping contests, there was rifle and pistol shooting, in both of which old Nelson stood first, with Shaw, foreman of the mines, second.

The great event of the day, however, was to be the four-horse race, for which three teams were

entered—one from the mines driven by Nixon, Craig's friend, a citizens' team, and Sandy's. The race was really between the miners' team and that from the woods, for the citizens' team, though made up of speedy horses, had not been driven much together and knew neither their driver nor each other. In the miners' team were four bays, very powerful, a trifle heavy perhaps, but well matched, perfectly trained, and perfectly handled by their driver. Sandy had his long, rangy roans, and for leaders a pair of half-broken pinto bronchos. The pintos, caught the summer before upon the Alberta prairies, were fleet as deer, but wicked and uncertain. They were Baptiste's special care and pride. If they would only run straight there was little doubt that they would carry the roans and themselves to glory; but one could not tell the moment they might bolt or kick things to pieces.

Being the only non-partisan in the crowd, I was asked to referee. The race was about half a mile and return, the first and last quarters being upon the ice. The course, after leaving the ice, led up from the river by a long, easy slope to the level above, and at the further end curved somewhat sharply round the old fort. The only condition attaching to the race was that the teams should start from the scratch, make the turn of the fort,

and finish at the scratch. There were no vexing regulations as to fouls. The man making the foul would find it necessary to reckon with the crowd, which was considered sufficient guarantee for a fair and square race. Owing to the hazards of the course, the result would depend upon the skill of drivers quite as much as upon the speed of the teams. The points of hazard were at the turn round the old fort and at a little ravine which led down to the river, over which the road passed by means of a long log bridge or causeway.

From a point upon the high bank of the river the whole course lay in open view. It was a scene full of life and vividly picturesque. There were miners in dark clothes and peak caps ; citizens in ordinary garb ; ranchmen in wide cowboy hats and buckskin shirts and leggings, some with cartridge-belts and pistols ; a few half-breeds and Indians in half-native, half-civilized dress ; and scattering through the crowd the lumbermen with gay scarlet and blue blanket coats, and some with knitted toques of the same colors. A very good-natured but extremely uncertain crowd it was. At the head of each horse stood a man, but at the pintos' heads Baptiste stood alone, trying to hold down the off leader, thrown into a frenzy of fear by the yelling of the crowd.

Gradually all became quiet, till, in the midst of absolute stillness, came the words, "Are you ready?" then the pistol-shot, and the great race had begun. Above the roar of the crowd came the shrill cry of Baptiste as he struck his broncho with the palm of his hand and swung himself into the sleigh beside Sandy as it shot past.

Like a flash the bronchos sprang to the front, two lengths before the other teams; but, terrified by the yelling of the crowd, instead of bending to the left bank, up which the road wound, they wheeled to the right and were almost across the river before Sandy could swing them back into the course.

Baptiste's cries, a curious mixture of French and English, continued to strike through all other sounds till they gained the top of the slope, to find the others almost a hundred yards in front, the citizens' team leading, with the miners' following close. The moment the pintos caught sight of the teams before them they set off at a terrific pace and steadily devoured the intervening space. Nearer and nearer the turn came, the eight horses in front, running straight and well within their speed. After them flew the pintos, running savagely with ears set back, leading well the big roans, thundering along and gaining at every bound. And now the citizens' team has

almost reached the fort, running hard and drawing away from the bays. But Nixon knew what he was about, and was simply steadying his team for the turn. The event proved his wisdom, for in the turn the leading team left the track, lost for a moment or two in the deep snow, and before they could regain the road the bays had swept superbly past, leaving their rivals to follow in the rear. On came the pintos, swiftly nearing the fort. Surely at that pace they cannot make the turn. But Sandy knows his leaders. They have their eyes upon the teams in front and need no touch of rein. Without the slightest change in speed the nimble-footed bronchos round the turn, hauling the big roans after them, and fall in behind the citizens' team, which is regaining steadily the ground lost in the turn.

And now the struggle is for the bridge over the ravine. The bays in front, running with mouths wide open, are evidently doing their best; behind them, and every moment nearing them, but at the limit of their speed, too, came the lighter and fleeter citizens' team; while opposite their driver are the pintos, pulling hard, eager and fresh. Their temper is too uncertain to send them to the front; they run well following, but when leading cannot be trusted, and besides, a broncho hates a bridge; so Sandy holds them where they



are, waiting and hoping for his chance after the bridge is crossed. Foot by foot the citizens' team creep up upon the flank of the bays, with the pintos in turn hugging them closely, till it seems as if the three, if none slackens, must strike the bridge together; and this will mean destruction to one at least. This danger Sandy perceives, but he dare not check his leaders. Suddenly, within a few yards of the bridge, Baptiste throws himself upon the lines, wrenches them out of Sandy's hands, and with a quick swing faces the pintos down the steep side of the ravine, which is almost sheer ice with a thin coat of snow. It is a daring course to take, for the ravine, though not deep, is full of undergrowth and is partially closed up by a brush-heap at the further end. But with a yell Baptiste hurls his four horses down the slope and into the undergrowth. "*Allons, mes enfants! Courage! Vite! vite!*" cries the driver, and nobly do the pintos respond. Regardless of bushes and brush-heaps, they tear their way through; but as they emerge the hind bob-sleigh catches a root, and with a crash the sleigh is hurled high in the air. Baptiste's cries ring out high and shrill as ever, encouraging his team, and never cease till, with a plunge and a scramble, they clear the brush-heap lying at the mouth of the ravine and are out on the ice on the river,

with Baptiste standing on the front bob, the box trailing behind, and Sandy nowhere to be seen.

Three hundred yards of the course remain. The bays, perfectly handled, have gained at the bridge and in the descent to the ice, and are leading the citizens' team by half a dozen sleigh-lengths. Behind both comes Baptiste. It is now or never for the pintos. The rattle of the trailing box, together with the wild yelling of the crowd rushing down the bank, excites the bronchos to madness, and taking the bits in their teeth they do their first free running that day. Past the citizens' team like a whirlwind they dash, clear the intervening space, and gain the flanks of the bays. Can the bays hold them? Over them leans their driver, plying for the first time the hissing lash. Only fifty yards more. The miners begin to yell. But Baptiste, waving his lines high in one hand, seizes his toque with the other, whirls it about his head, and flings it with a fiercer yell than ever at the bronchos. Like the bursting of a hurricane the pintos leap forward, and with a splendid rush cross the scratch, winners by their own lengths.

There was a wild quarter of an hour. The shantymen had torn off their coats and were waving them wildly and tossing them high, while the ranchers added to the uproar by emptying

their revolvers into the air in a way that made one nervous.

When the crowd was somewhat quieted Sandy's stiff figure appeared, slowly making toward them. A dozen lumbermen ran to him, eagerly inquiring if he were hurt. But Sandy could only curse the little Frenchman for losing the race.

"Lost! Why, man, we've won it!" shouted a voice, at which Sandy's rage vanished, and he allowed himself to be carried in upon the shoulders of his admirers.

"Where's the lad?" was his first question.

"The bronchos are off with him. He's down at the rapids like enough."

"Let me go!" shouted Sandy, setting off at a run in the track of the sleigh. He had not gone far before he met Baptiste coming back with his team foaming, the roans going quietly, but the bronchos dancing and eager to be at it again.

"*Voilà!* Bully boy! Tank the *bon Dieu*, Sandy. You not keel, heh? Ah! you are one grand chevalier," exclaimed Baptiste, hauling Sandy in and thrusting the lines into his hands. And so they came back, the sleigh box still dragging behind, the pintos executing fantastic figures on their hind-legs, and Sandy holding them down. The little Frenchman struck a dramatic attitude and called out:

"*Voilà!* What's the matter wiz Sandy, heh?"

The roar that answered set the bronchos off again plunging and kicking, and only when Baptiste got them by the heads could they be induced to stand long enough to allow Sandy to be proclaimed winner of the race. Several of the lumbermen sprang into the sleigh box with Sandy and Baptiste, among them Keefe, followed by Nelson, and the first part of the great day was over. Slavin could not understand the new order of things. That a great event like the four-horse race should not be followed by "drinks all around" was to him at once disgusting and incomprehensible; and realizing his defeat for the moment, he fell into the crowd and disappeared. But he left behind him his "runners." He had not yet thrown up the game.

Mr. Craig meantime came to me, and looking anxiously after Sandy in his sleigh, with his frantic crowd of yelling admirers, said in a gloomy voice:

"Poor Sandy! He is easily caught, and Keefe has the devil's cunning."

"He won't touch Slavin's whisky to-day," I answered confidently.

"There'll be twenty bottles waiting him in the stable," he replied bitterly, "and I can't go fol-

lowing him up. He won't stand that—no man would. God help us all.”

I could hardly recognize myself, for I found in my heart an earnest echo to that prayer as I watched him go toward the crowd again, his face set in strong determination. He looked like the captain of a forlorn hope, and I was proud to be following him.

## CHAPTER III.

## WATERLOO. OUR FIGHT—HIS VICTORY.

THE sports were over, and there remained still an hour to be filled in before dinner. It was an hour full of danger to Craig's hopes of victory, for the men were wild with excitement and ready for the most reckless means of "slinging their dust." I could not but admire the skill with which Mr. Craig caught their attention.

"Gentlemen," he called out, "we've forgotten the judge of the great race. Three cheers for Mr. Connor!"

Two of the shantymen picked me up and hoisted me on their shoulders while the cheers were given.

"Announce the Punch and Judy," he entreated me in a low voice. I did so in a little speech, and was forthwith borne aloft, through the street to the booth, followed by the whole crowd, cheering like mad.

The excitement of the crowd caught me, and for an hour I squeaked and worked the wires of

the immortal and unhappy family in a manner hitherto unapproached—by me at least. I was glad enough when Graeme came to me to send the men in to dinner. This Mr. Punch did in the most gracious manner, and again with cheers for Punch's master they trooped tumultuously into the tent.

We had only well begun when Baptiste came in quietly but hurriedly and whispered to me:

“M'sieu Craig, he's gone to Slavin's, and would lak you and M'sieu Graeme would follow queek. Sandy he's take one leel drink up at the stable, and he's go mad lak one *diable*.”

I sent him for Graeme, who was presiding at dinner, and set off for Slavin's at a run. There I found Mr. Craig and Nelson holding Sandy, more than half drunk, back from Slavin, who, stripped to the shirt, was coolly waiting with a taunting smile.

“Let me go, Mr. Craig,” Sandy was saying. “I am a good Presbyterian. He is a Papist thief and he has my money, and I will have it out of the soul of him.”

“Let him go, preacher,” sneered Slavin. “I'll cool him off for yez. But ye'd better hold him if yez wants his mug left on to him.”

“Let him go!” Keefe was shouting.

“Hands off!” Blaney was echoing.

I pushed my way in.

"What's up?" I cried.

"Mr. Connor," said Sandy solemnly, "it is a gentleman you are, though your name is against you, and I am a good Presbyterian, and I can give you the Commandments and Reasons annexed to them; but you's a thief, a Papist thief, and I am justified in getting my money out of his soul."

"But," I remonstrated, "you won't get it in this way."

"He has my money," reiterated Sandy.

"He is a blank liar, and he's afraid to take it up," said Slavin in a low, cool tone.

With a roar Sandy broke away and rushed at him; but, without moving from his track, Slavin met him with a straight left-hander and laid him flat.

"Hooray!" yelled Blaney. "Ireland forever!" and, seizing the iron poker, swung it around his head, crying: "Back, or by the holy Moses I'll kill the first man that interferes wid the game."

"Give it to him!" Keefe said savagely.

Sandy rose slowly, gazing round stupidly.

"He don't know what hit him," laughed Keefe.

This roused the Highlander, and saying, "I'll settle you afterward, Mr. Keefe," he rushed in again at Slavin. Again Slavin met him with his



left, staggered him, and before he fell took a step forward and delivered a terrific right-hand blow on his jaw. Poor Sandy went down in a heap amid the yells of Blaney, Keefe, and some others of the gang. I was in despair when in came Baptiste and Graeme.

One look at Sandy, and Baptiste tore off his coat and cap, slammed them on the floor, danced on them, and with a long-drawn "*Sap-r-r-r-rie!*" rushed at Slavin. But Graeme caught him by the back of the neck, saying, "Hold on, little man," and turning to Slavin pointed to Sandy, who was reviving under Nelson's care, and said: "What's this for?"

"Ask him," said Slavin insolently. "He knows."

"What is it, Nelson?"

Nelson explained that Sandy, after drinking some at the stable and a glass at the Black Rock Hotel, had come down here with Keefe and the others, had lost his money, and was accusing Slavin of robbing him.

"Did you furnish him with liquor?" said Graeme sternly.

"It is none of your business," replied Slavin with an oath.

"I shall make it my business. It is not the first time my men have lost money in this saloon."

“You lie !” said Slavin with deliberate emphasis.

“Slavin,” said Graeme quietly, “it is a pity you said that, because unless you apologize in one minute I shall make you sorry.”

“Apologize ?” roared Slavin. “Apologize to you ?” calling him a vile name.

Graeme grew white and said even more slowly :

“Now you’ll have to take it; no apology will do.”

He slowly stripped off coat and vest. Mr. Craig interposed, begging Graeme to let the matter pass.

“Surely he is not worth it.”

“Mr. Craig,” said Graeme with an easy smile, “you don’t understand. No man can call me that name and walk around afterward feeling well.”

Then, turning to Slavin, he said :

“Now, if you want a minute’s rest, I can wait.”

Slavin, with a curse, bade him come.

“Blaney,” said Graeme sharply, “you get back.” Blaney promptly stepped back to Keefe’s side. “Nelson, you and Baptiste can see that they stay there.” The old man nodded and looked at Craig, who simply said : “Do the best you can.”

It was a good fight. Slavin had plenty of pluck and for a time forced the fighting, Graeme guarding easily and tapping him aggravatingly about

the nose and eyes, drawing blood, but not disabling him. Gradually there came a look of fear into Slavin's eyes and the beads stood upon his face. He had met his master.

"Now, Slavin, you're beginning to be sorry, and now I am going to show you what you are made of."

Graeme made one or two lightning passes, struck Slavin one, two, three terrific blows, and laid him quite flat and senseless. Keefe and Blaney both sprang forward, but there was a savage kind of growl.

"Hold, there!" It was old man Nelson looking along a pistol barrel. "You know me, Keefe," he said. "You won't do any murder this time."

Keefe turned green and yellow and staggered back, while Slavin slowly rose to his feet.

"Will you take some more?" said Graeme. "You haven't got much; but mind, I have stopped playing with you. Put up your gun, Nelson. No one will interfere now."

Slavin hesitated, then rushed, but Graeme stepped to meet him, and we saw Slavin's heels in the air as he fell back upon his neck and shoulders and lay still, with his toes quivering.

"*Bon!*" yelled Baptiste. "Bully boy! Dat's *de bon* stuff. Dat's larn him one good lesson." But immediately he shrieked, "*Gar-r-r-r-e d vous!*"

He was too late, for there was a crash of breaking glass, and Graeme fell to the floor with a long deep cut on the side of his head. Keefe had hurled a bottle with all too sure an aim and had fled. I thought he was dead; but we carried him out, and in a few minutes he groaned, opened his eyes, and sunk again into insensibility.

“Where can we take him?” I cried.

“To my shack,” said Mr. Craig.

“Is there no place nearer?”

“Yes, Mrs. Mavor’s. I shall run on to tell her.”

She met us at the door. I had in mind to say some words of apology, but when I looked upon her face I forgot my words, forgot my business at her door, and stood simply looking.

“Come in! Bring him in! Please do not wait,” she said, and her voice was sweet and soft and firm.

We laid him in a large room at the back of the shop over which Mrs. Mavor lived. Together we dressed the wound, her firm white fingers skilful as if with long training. Before the dressing was finished I sent Craig off, for the time had come for the magic lantern in the church, and I knew how critical the moment was in our fight.

“Go,” I said. “He is coming to and we do not need you.”

In a few moments more Graeme revived, and gazing about asked : " What's all this about ? " and then, recollecting, " Ah ! that brute Keefe ; " then seeing my anxious face he said carelessly : " Awful bore, ain't it ? Sorry to trouble you, old fellow."

" You be hanged ! " I said shortly ; for his old sweet smile was playing about his lips, and was almost too much for me. " Mrs. Mavor and I are in command, and you must keep perfectly still."

" Mrs. Mavor ? " he said in surprise.

She came forward, with a slight flush on her face.

" I think you know me, Mr. Graeme."

" I have often seen you and wished to know you. I am sorry to bring you this trouble."

" You must not say so," she replied, " but let me do all for you that I can. And now the doctor says you are to lie still."

" The doctor ? Oh ! you mean Connor. He is hardly there yet. You don't know each other. Permit me to present Mr. Connor, Mrs. Mavor."

As she bowed slightly her eyes looked into mine with serious gaze, not inquiring, yet searching my soul. As I looked into her eyes I forgot everything about me, and when I recalled myself it seemed as if I had been away in some far place. It was not their color or their brightness ; I do

not yet know their color, and I have often looked into them ; and they were not bright ; but they were clear, and one could look far down into them, and in their depths see a glowing, steady light. As I went to get some drugs from the Black Rock doctor I found myself wondering about that far-down light ; and about her voice, how it could get that sound from far away.

I found the doctor quite drunk, as indeed Mr. Craig had warned ; but his drugs were good, and I got what I wanted and quickly returned.

While Graeme slept Mrs. Mavor made me tea. As the evening wore on I told her the events of the day, dwelling admiringly upon Craig's generalship. She smiled at this.

" He got me, too," she said. " Nixon was sent to me just before the sports, and I don't think he will break down to-day, and I am so thankful."

And her eyes glowed.

" I am quite sure he won't," I thought to myself, but I said no word.

After a long pause she went on, " I have promised Mr. Craig to sing to-night if I am needed !" and then, after a moment's hesitation, " it is two years since I have been able to sing—two years," she repeated, " since"—and then her brave voice trembled—" my husband was killed."

"I quite understand," I said, having no other word on my tongue.

"And," she went on quietly, "I fear I have been selfish. It is hard to sing the same songs. We were very happy. But the miners like to hear me sing, and I think perhaps it helps them to feel less lonely and keeps them from evil. I shall try to-night if I am needed. Mr. Craig will not ask me unless he must."

I would have seen every miner and lumberman in the place hideously drunk before I would have asked her to sing one song while her heart ached. I wondered at Craig, and said rather angrily :

"He thinks only of those wretched miners and shantymen of his."

She looked at me with wonder in her eyes and said gently :

"And are they not Christ's too?"

And I found no word to reply.

It was nearing ten o'clock, and I was wondering how the fight was going and hoping that Mrs. Mavor would not be needed, when the door opened and old man Nelson and Sandy, the latter much battered and ashamed, came in with the word for Mrs. Mavor.

"I will come," she said simply. She saw me preparing to accompany her and asked : "Do you think you can leave him?"

“He will do quite well in Nelson’s care.”

“Then I am glad; for I must take my little one with me. I did not put her to bed in case I should need to go, and I may not leave her.”

We entered the church by the back door, and saw at once that even yet the battle might easily be lost.

Some miners had just come from Slavin’s evidently bent on breaking up the meeting in revenge for the collapse of the dance, which Slavin was unable to enjoy, much less direct. Craig was gallantly holding his ground, finding it hard work to keep his men in good humor, and so prevent a fight, for there were cries of “Put him out! Put the beast out!” at a miner half drunk and wholly outrageous.

The look of relief that came over his face when Craig caught sight of us told how anxious he had been, and reconciled me to Mrs. Mavor’s singing.

“Thank the good God,” he said, with what came near being a sob. “I was about to despair.”

He immediately walked to the front and called out:

“Gentlemen, if you wish it Mrs. Mavor will sing.”

There was a dead silence. Some one began to applaud, but a miner said savagely:



“Stop that, you fool!”

There was a few moments' delay, when from the crowd a voice called out, “Does Mrs. Mavor wish to sing?” followed by cries of “Aye, that's it.” Then Shaw, the foreman at the mines, stood up in the audience and said:

“Mr. Craig and gentlemen, you know that three years ago I was known as ‘Old Ricketts,’ and that I owe all I am to-night, under God, to Mrs. Mavor and”—with a little quiver in his voice—“her baby. And we all know that for two years she has not sung, and we all know why. And what I say is that if she does not feel like singing to-night she is not going to sing to keep any drunken brute of Slavin's crowd quiet.”

There were deep growls of approval all over the church. I could have hugged Shaw then and there. Mr. Craig went to Mrs. Mavor, and after a word with her came back and said:

“Mrs. Mavor wishes me to thank her dear friend Mr. Shaw, but says she would like to sing.”

The response was perfect stillness. Mr. Craig sat down to the organ and played the opening bars of the touching melody, “Oft in the Stilly Night.” Mrs. Mavor came to the front, and with a smile of exquisite sweetness upon her sad face, and looking straight at us with her glorious eyes, began to sing.

Her voice, a rich soprano, even and true, rose and fell, now soft, now strong, but always filling the building, pouring around us floods of music. I had heard Patti's "Home, Sweet Home," and of all singing that alone affected me as did this.

At the end of the first verse the few women in the church and some men were weeping quietly, but when she began the words—

"When I remember all  
The friends once linked together,"

sobs came on every side from these tender-hearted fellows, and Shaw quite lost his grip. But she sang steadily on, the tone clearer and sweeter and fuller at every note, and when the sound of her voice died away, she stood looking at the men as if in wonder that they should weep. No one moved. Mr. Craig played softly on, and, wandering through many variations, arrived at last at

"Jesus, lover of my soul."

As she sang the appealing words her face was lifted up and she saw none of us; but she must have seen some one, for the cry in her voice could only come from one who could see and feel help close at hand. On and on went the glorious voice, searching my soul's depths; but when she came to the words—

"Thou, O Christ, art all I want,"

she stretched up her arms—she had quite forgotten us, her voice had borne her to other worlds—and sang with such a passion of *abandon* that my soul was ready to surrender anything, everything.

Again Mr. Craig wandered on through his changing chords till again he came to familiar ground, and the voice began, in low, thrilling tones, Bernard's great song of home—

“Jerusalem the golden.”

Every word, with all its weight of meaning, came winging to our souls, till we found ourselves gazing afar into those stately halls of Zion, with their daylight serene and their jubilant throngs. When the singer came to the last verse there was a pause. Again Mr. Craig softly played the interlude; but still there was no voice. I looked up. She was very white and her eyes were glowing with their deep light. Mr. Craig looked quickly about, saw her, stopped and half rose, as if to go to her, when, in a voice that seemed to come from a far-off land, she went on—

“O sweet and blessed country!”

The longing, the yearning in the second “O” were indescribable. Again and again, as she held that word and then dropped down with the

cadence in the music, my heart ached for I knew not what.

The audience were sitting as in a trance. The grimy faces of the miners—for they never get quite white—were furrowed with the tear-courses. Shaw by this time had his face too lifted high, his eyes gazing far above the singer's head, and I knew by the rapture in his face that he was seeing, as she saw, the thronging stately halls and the white-robed conquerors. He had felt and was still feeling all the stress of the fight, and to him the vision of the conquerors in their glory was soul-drawing and soul-stirring. And Nixon, too—he had his vision; but what he saw was the face of the singer with the shining eyes, and by the look of him that was vision enough.

Immediately after her last note Mrs. Mavor stretched out her hands to her little girl, who was sitting on her knee, caught her up, and, holding her close to her breast, walked quickly behind the curtain. Not a sound followed the singing; no one moved till she had disappeared; and then Mr. Craig came to the front, and, motioning to me to follow Mrs. Mavor, began in a low, distinct voice:

“Gentlemen, it was not easy for Mrs. Mavor to sing for us, and you know she sang because she is a miner's wife, and her heart is with the

miners. But she sang, too, because her heart is His who came to earth this day so many years ago to save us all; and she would make you love Him, too. For in loving Him you are saved from all base loves, and you know what I mean.

“And before we say good night, men, I want to know if the time is not come when all of you who mean to be better than you are should join in putting from us this thing that has brought sorrow and shame to us and to those we love. You know what I mean. Some of you are strong. Will you stand by and see weaker men robbed of the money they save for those far away, and robbed of the manhood that no money can buy or restore?”

“Will the strong men help? Shall we all join hands in this? What do you say? In this town we have often seen hell, and just a moment ago we were all looking into heaven, ‘the sweet and blessed country.’ O men!”—and his voice rang in an agony through the building—“O men! which shall be ours? For Heaven’s dear sake, let us help one another! Who will?”

I was looking out through a slit in the curtain. The men, already wrought to intense feeling by the music, were listening with set faces and gleaming eyes, and as at the appeal “Who will?” Craig raised high his hand, Shaw, Nixon, and a

hundred men sprang to their feet and held high their hands.

I have witnessed some thrilling scenes in my life, but never anything to equal that: the one man on the platform standing at full height, with his hand thrown up to heaven, and the hundred men below standing straight, with arms up at full length, silent and almost motionless.

For a moment Craig held them so, and again his voice rang out, louder, sterner than before:

“All who mean it, say, ‘By God’s help, I will.’”

And back from a hundred throats came deep and strong the words, “By God’s help, I will.”

At this point Mrs. Mavor, whom I had quite forgotten, put her hand on my arm. “Go and tell him,” she panted, “I want them to come on Thursday night, as they used to in the other days—go—quick,” and she almost pushed me out. I gave Craig her message. He held up his hand for silence.

“Mrs. Mavor wishes me to say that she will be glad to see you all, as in the old days, on Thursday evening; and I can think of no better place to give formal expression to our pledge of this night.”

There was a shout of acceptance, and then, at some one’s call, the long-pent-up feelings of the crowd found vent in three mighty cheers for Mrs. Mavor.

“Now for our old hymn,” called out Mr. Craig, “and Mrs. Mavor will lead us.”

He sat down at the organ, played a few bars of “The Sweet By and By,” and then Mrs. Mavor began. But not a soul joined till the refrain was reached, and then they sang as only men with their hearts on fire can sing. But after the last refrain Mr. Craig made a sign to Mrs. Mavor, and she sang alone, slowly and softly, and with eyes looking far away—

“In the sweet by and by,  
We shall meet on that beautiful shore.”

There was no benediction—there seemed no need; and the men went quietly out. But over and over again the voice kept singing in my ears and in my heart, “We shall meet on that beautiful shore.” And after the sleigh-loads of men had gone and left the street empty, as I stood with Craig in the radiant moonlight that made the great mountains about come near us, from Sandy’s sleigh we heard in the distance Baptiste’s French-English song; but the song that floated down with the sound of the bells from the miners’ sleigh was—

“We shall meet on that beautiful shore.”

“Poor old Shaw!” said Craig softly.

When the last sound had died away I turned to him and said:

“ You have won your fight.”

“ We have won our fight. I was beaten,” he replied quickly, offering me his hand. Then, taking off his cap and looking up beyond the mountaintops and the silent stars, he added softly: “ Our fight, but His victory.”

And thinking it all over, I could not say but perhaps he was right.



## CHAPTER IV.

## MRS. MAVOR'S STORY.

THE days that followed the Black Rock Christmas were anxious days and weary, but not for the brightest of my life would I change them now; for as after the burning heat or rocking storms the dying day lies beautiful in the tender glow of the evening, so these days have lost their weariness and lie bathed in a misty glory. The years that bring us many ills and that pass so stormfully over us bear away with them the ugliness, the weariness, the pain that are theirs, but the beauty, the sweetness, the rest they leave untouched, for these are eternal. As the mountains, that near at hand stand jagged and scarred, in the far distance repose in their soft robes of purple haze, so the rough present fades into the past, soft and sweet and beautiful.

I have set myself to recall the pain and anxiety of those days and nights when we waited in fear for the turn of the fever, but I can only think of

the patience and gentleness and courage of her who stood beside me, bearing more than half my burden. And while I can see the face of Leslie Graeme, ghastly or flushed, and hear his low moaning or the broken words of his delirium, I think chiefly of the bright face bending over him, and of the cool, firm, swift-moving hands that soothed and smoothed and rested, and the voice, like the soft song of a bird in the twilight, that never failed to bring peace.

Mrs. Mavor and I were much together during those days. I made my home in Mr. Craig's shack, but most of my time was spent beside my friend. We did not see much of Craig, for he was heart-deep with the miners, laying plans for the making of the league the following Thursday; and though he shared our anxiety and was ever ready to relieve us, his thought and his talk had mostly to do with the league.

Mrs. Mavor's evenings were given to the miners, but her afternoons mostly to Graeme and to me, and then it was I saw another side of her character. We would sit in her little dining-room, where the pictures on the walls, the quaint old silver, and bits of curiously cut glass all spoke of other and different days, and thence we would roam the world of literature and art. Keenly sensitive to all the good and beautiful in these,

she had her favorites among the masters, for whom she was ready to do battle; and when her argument, instinct with fancy and vivid imagination, failed, she swept away all opposing opinion with the swift rush of her enthusiasm; so that though I felt she was beaten, I was left without words to reply. Shakespeare and Tennyson and Burns she loved, but not Shelley nor Byron nor even Wordsworth. Browning she knew not, and therefore could not rank him with her noblest three; but when I read to her "A Death in the Desert" and came to the noble words at the end of the tale—

"For all was as I say, and now the man  
Lies as he once lay, breast to breast with God,"

the light shone in her eyes and she said: "Oh, that is good and great. I shall get much out of him. I had always feared he was impossible." And "Paracelsus," too, stirred her; but when I recited the thrilling fragment, "Prospice," on to that closing rapturous cry—

"Then a light, then thy breast,  
O thou soul of my soul! I shall clasp thee again,  
And with God be the rest!"

the red color faded from her cheek, her breath came in a sob, and she rose quickly and passed out without a word. Ever after Browning was

among her gods. But when we talked of music, she, adoring Wagner, soared upon wings of the mighty Tannhäuser, far above, into regions unknown, leaving me to walk soberly with Beethoven and Mendelssohn. Yet with all our free, frank talk, there was all the while that in her gentle courtesy which kept me from venturing into any chamber of her life whose door she did not set freely open to me. So I vexed myself about her, and when Mr. Craig returned the next week from the Landing, where he had been for some days, my first question was :

“ Who is Mrs. Mavor ? And how in the name of all that is wonderful and unlikely does she come to be here ? And why does she stay ? ”

He would not answer then. Whether it was that his mind was full of the coming struggle or whether he shrank from the tale, I know not ; but that night, when we sat together beside his fire, he told me the story while I smoked. He was worn with his long, hard drive and with the burden of his work, but as he went on with his tale, looking into the fire as he told it, he forgot all his present weariness and lived again the scenes he painted for me. This was his story :

“ I remember well my first sight of her as she sprang from the front seat of the stage to the ground, hardly touching her husband’s hand. She

looked a mere girl. Let's see—five years ago—she couldn't have been a day over twenty-three. She looked barely twenty. Her swift glance swept over the group of miners at the hotel door, and then rested on the mountains standing in all their autumn glory.

“I was proud of our mountains that evening. Turning to her husband, she exclaimed: ‘Oh, Lewis, are they not grand? and lovely, too?’ Every miner lost his heart then and there, but all waited for Abe, the driver, to give his verdict before venturing an opinion. Abe said nothing until he had taken a preliminary drink, and then, calling all hands to fill up, he lifted his glass high and said solemnly:

“‘Boys, here's to her.’

“Like a flash every glass was emptied, and Abe called out: ‘Fill her up again, boys! My treat!’

“He was evidently quite worked up. Then he began with solemn emphasis:

“‘Boys, you hear me! She's a No. 1, triple X, the pure quill with a bead on it: she's a——’ and for the first time in his Black Rock history Abe was stuck for a word. Some one suggested ‘angel.’

“‘Angel!’ repeated Abe with infinite contempt. ‘Angel be blowed’ (I paraphrase here);

'angels ain't in the same month with her. I'd like to see any blanked angel swing my team around them curves without a shiver.'

"'Held the lines herself, Abe?' asked the miner.

"'That's what,' said Abe; and then he went off into a fusilade of scientific profanity, expressive of his esteem for the girl who had swung his team round the curves; and the miners nodded to each other and winked their entire approval of Abe's performance, for this was his specialty.

"'Very decent fellow, Abe, but his talk wouldn't print.'"

Here Craig paused, as if balancing Abe's virtues and vices.

"'Well,' I urged, "who is she?"

"'Oh, yes,'" he said, recalling himself. "She is an Edinburgh young lady—met Lewis Mavor, a young Scotch-Englishman, in London—wealthy, good family, and all that, but fast and going to pieces at home. His people, who own large shares in these mines here, as a last resort sent him out here to reform. Curiously innocent ideas those old-country people have of the reforming properties of this atmosphere! They send their young bloods here to reform. Here! in this devil's camp-ground, where a man's lust is his only law, and where, from sheer monotony, a

man must betake himself to the only excitement of the place—that offered by the saloon. Good people in the East hold up holy hands of horror at these godless miners; but I tell you it's asking these boys a good deal to keep straight and clean in a place like this. I take my excitement in fighting the devil and doing my work generally, and that gives me enough; but these poor chaps—hard-worked, homeless, with no break or change—God help them and me!” and his voice sank low.

“Well,” I persisted, “did Mavor reform?”

Again he roused himself.

“Reform? Not exactly. In six months he had broken through all restraint; and, mind you, not the miners' fault—not a miner helped him down. It was a sight to make angels weep when Mrs. Mavor would come to the saloon door for her husband. Every miner would vanish. They could not look upon her shame, and they would send Mavor forth in the charge of Billy Breen, a queer little chap who had belonged to the Mavors in some way in the old country, and between them they would get him home. How she stood it puzzles me to this day; but she never made any sign and her courage never failed. It was always a bright, brave, proud face she held up to the world—except in church; there it was different.

I used to preach my sermons, I believe, mostly for her—but never so that she could suspect—as bravely and as cheerily as I could. And as she listened, and especially as she sang—how she used to sing in those days!—there was no touch of pride in her face, though the courage never died out, but appeal! appeal! I could have cursed aloud the cause of her misery or wept for the pity of it. Before her baby was born he seemed to pull himself together, for he was quite mad about her, and from the day the baby came—talk about miracles!—from that day he never drank a drop. She gave the baby over to him, and the baby simply absorbed him.

“He was a new man. He could not drink whisky and kiss his baby. And the miners—it was really absurd if it were not so pathetic. It was the first baby in Black Rock, and they used to crowd Mavor’s shop and peep into the room at the back of it—I forgot to tell you that when he lost his position as manager he opened a hardware shop, for his people chucked him and he was too proud to write home for money—just for a chance to be asked in to see the baby. I came upon Nixon standing at the back of the shop after he had seen the baby for the first time, sobbing hard, and to my question he replied: ‘It’s just like my own.’ You can’t understand this. But



to men who have lived so long in the mountains that they have forgotten what a baby looks like, who have had experience of humanity only in its roughest, foulest form, this little mite, sweet and clean, was like an angel fresh from heaven, the one link in all that black camp that bound them to what was purest and best in their past.

“And to see the mother and her baby handle the miners !

“Oh, it was all beautiful beyond words ! I shall never forget the shock I got one night when I found ‘Old Ricketts’ nursing the baby. A drunken old beast he was ; but there he was sitting, sober enough, making extraordinary faces at the baby, who was grabbing at his nose and whiskers and cooing in blissful delight. Poor ‘Old Ricketts’ looked as if he had been caught stealing, and muttered something about having to go, gazed wildly round for some place in which to lay the baby, when in came the mother, saying in her own sweet, frank way : ‘ Oh, Mr. Ricketts ’ (she didn’t find out till afterward his name was Shaw), ‘ would you mind keeping her just a little longer ? I shall be back in a few minutes.’ And ‘ Old Ricketts ’ guessed he could wait.

“ But in six months mother and baby, between them, transformed ‘ Old Ricketts ’ into Mr. Shaw, fire boss of the mines. And then in the evenings

when she would be singing her baby to sleep, the little shop would be full of miners, listening in dead silence to the baby-songs, and the English songs, and the Scotch songs she poured forth without stint, for she sang more for them than for her baby. No wonder they adored her. She was so bright, so gay, she brought light with her when she went into the camp, into the pits—for she went down to see the men work—or into a sick miner's shack; and many a man, lonely and sick for home or wife, or baby or mother, found in that back room cheer and comfort and courage, and to many a poor broken wretch that room became, as one miner put it, 'the anteroom to heaven.'"

Mr. Craig paused and I waited. Then he went on slowly:

"For a year and a half that was the happiest home in all the world till one day——"

He put his face in his hands and shuddered.

"I don't think I can ever forget the awful horror of that bright fall afternoon when 'Old Ricketts' came breathless to me and gasped, 'Come! for the dear Lord's sake,' and I rushed after him. At the mouth of the shaft lay three men dead. One was Lewis Mavor. He had gone down to superintend the running of a new drift; the two men, half drunk with Slavin's whisky, set off a

shot prematurely, to their own and Mavor's destruction. They were badly burned, but his face was untouched. A miner was sponging off the bloody froth oozing from his lips. The others were standing about waiting for me to speak. But I could find no word, for my heart was sick, thinking, as they were, of the young mother and her baby waiting at home. So I stood, looking stupidly from one to the other, trying to find some reason—coward that I was—why another should bear the news rather than I. And while we stood there, looking at one another in fear, there broke upon us the sound of a voice mounting high above the birch tops, singing—

“ ‘ Will ye no' come back again ?  
 Will ye no' come back again ?  
 Better lo'ed ye canna be,  
 Will ye no' come back again ? ’ ”

“ A strange terror seized us. Instinctively the men closed up in front of the body and stood in silence. Nearer and nearer came the clear, sweet voice, ringing like a silver bell up the steep—

“ ‘ Sweet the lav'rock's note and lang,  
 Liltin' wildly up the glen,  
 But aye tae me he sings ae sang,  
 Will ye no' come back again ? ’ ”

“ Before the verse was finished ‘ Old Ricketts ’

had dropped on his knees, sobbing out brokenly, 'O God! O God! have pity, have pity, have pity!'—and every man took off his hat. And still the voice came nearer, singing so brightly the refrain,

“ ‘ Will ye no' come back again ? ’ ”

“It became unbearable. ‘ Old Ricketts ’ sprang suddenly to his feet and, gripping me by the arm, said piteously, ‘ Oh, go to her ! for Heaven’s sake, go to her ! ’ I next remember standing in her path and seeing her holding out her hands full of red lilies, crying out, ‘ Are they not lovely ? Lewis is so fond of them ! ’ With the promise of much finer ones I turned her down a path toward the river, talking I know not what folly till her great eyes grew grave, then anxious, and my tongue stammered and became silent. Then, laying her hand upon my arm, she said with gentle sweetness, ‘ Tell me your trouble, Mr. Craig, ’ and I knew my agony had come, and I burst out: ‘ Oh, if it were only mine ! ’ She turned quite white, and with her deep eyes— you’ve noticed her eyes—drawing the truth out of mine, she said: ‘ Is it mine, Mr. Craig, and my baby’s ? ’ I waited, thinking with what words to begin. She put one hand to her heart, and with the other caught a little poplar tree that

shivered under her grasp, and said with white lips, but even more gently, 'Tell me.' I wondered at my voice being so steady as I said: 'Mrs. Mavor, God will help you over.'

"She was a miner's wife and there was no need for more. I could see the pattern of the sunlight falling through the trees upon the grass. I could hear the murmur of the river and the cry of the catbird in the bushes, but we seemed to be in a strange and unreal world. Suddenly she stretched out her hands to me and with a little moan said: 'Take me to him.'

"'Sit down for a moment or two,' I entreated.

"'No! no! I am quite ready. See,' she added quietly, 'I am quite strong.'

"I set off by a short cut leading to her home, hoping the men would be there before us; but, passing me, she walked swiftly through the trees, and I followed in fear. As we came near the main path I heard the sound of feet, and I tried to stop her, but she, too, had heard and knew. 'Oh, let me go!' she said piteously; 'you need not fear.' And I had not the heart to stop her. In a little opening among the pines we met the bearers. When the men saw her they laid their burden gently down upon the carpet of yellow pine-needles, and then—for they had the hearts of true men in them—they went away into the

bushes and left her alone with her dead. She went swiftly to his side, making no cry, but kneeling beside him she stroked his face and hands, and touched his curls with her fingers, murmuring all the time soft words of love. 'Oh, my darling, my bonnie, bonnie darling, speak to me! Will ye not speak to me just one little word? Oh, my love, my love, my heart's love! Listen, my darling!' And she put her lips to his ear, whispering, and then the awful stillness. Suddenly she lifted her head and scanned his face, and then, glancing round with a wild surprise in her eyes, she cried: 'He will not speak to me! Oh, he will not speak to me!' I signed to the men, and as they came forward I went to her and took her hands.

" 'Oh,' she said, with a wail in her voice, 'he will not speak to me.' The men were sobbing aloud. She looked at them with wide-open eyes of wonder. 'Why are they weeping? Will he never speak to me again? Tell me,' she insisted gently. The words were running through my head—

“ 'There's a land that is fairer than day,'

and I said them over to her, holding her hands firmly in mine. She gazed at me as if in a dream and the light slowly faded from her eyes as she

said, tearing her hands from mine and waving them toward the mountains and the woods :

“ ‘ But nevermore here ? Nevermore here ? ’ ”

“ I believe in heaven and the other life, but I confess that for a moment it all seemed shadowy beside the reality of this warm, bright world, full of life and love. She was very ill for two nights, and when the coffin was closed a new baby lay in the father’s arms.

“ She slowly came back to life, but there were no more songs. The miners still come about her step and talk to her baby and bring her their sorrows and troubles ; but though she is always gentle, almost tender with them, no man ever says ‘ Sing.’ And that is why I am glad she sang last week. It will be good for her and good for them.”

“ Why does she stay ? ” I asked.

“ Mavor’s people wanted her to go to them,” he replied. “ They have money—she told me about it—but her heart is in the grave up there under the pines ; and besides, she hopes to do something for the miners, and she will not leave them.”

I am afraid I snorted a little impatiently as I said :

“ Nonsense ! Why, with her face, and manner, and voice she could be anything she liked in Edinburgh or in London.”

“And why Edinburgh or London?” he asked coolly.

“Why?” I repeated a little hotly. “You think this is better?”

“Nazareth was good enough for the Lord of glory,” he answered, with a smile none too bright; but it drew my heart to him and my heat was gone.

“How long will she stay?” I asked.

“Till her work is done,” he replied.

“And when will that be?” I asked impatiently.

“When God chooses,” he answered gravely; “and don’t you ever think but that it is worth while. One value of work is not that crowds stare at it. Read history, man!”

He rose abruptly and began to walk about.

“And don’t miss the whole meaning of the Life that lies at the foundation of your religion. Yes,” he added to himself, “the work is worth doing—worth even her doing.”

I could not think so then, but the light of the after years proved him wiser than I. A man, to see far, must climb to some height, and I was too much upon the plain in those days to catch even a glimpse of distant sunlit uplands of triumphant achievement that lie beyond the valley of self-sacrifice.



## CHAPTER V.

## THE MAKING OF THE LEAGUE.

THURSDAY morning found Craig anxious, even gloomy, but with fight in every line of his face. I tried to cheer him in my clumsy way by chaffing him about the league. But he did not blaze up as he often did. It was a thing too near his heart for that. He only shrank a little from my stupid chaff and said :

“Don’t, old chap. This is a good deal to me. I’ve tried for two years to get this, and if it falls through now I shall find it hard to bear.”

Then I repented my light words and said :

“Why, the thing will go sure enough. After that scene in the church they won’t go back.”

“Poor fellows!” he said as if to himself. “Whisky is about the only excitement they have, and they find it pretty tough to give it up; and a lot of the men are against the total abstinence idea. It seems rot to them.”

“It is pretty steep,” I said. “Can’t you do without it?”

“No, I fear not. There is nothing else for it.

Some of them talk of compromise. They want to quit the saloon and drink quietly in their shacks. The moderate drinker may have his place in other countries, though I can't see it. I haven't thought that out, but here the only safe man is the man who quits it dead and fights it straight ; anything else is sheerest humbug and nonsense."

I had not gone in much for total abstinence up to this time, chiefly because its advocates seemed for the most part to be somewhat ill-balanced ; but as I listened to Craig I began to feel that perhaps there was a total abstinence side to the temperance question ; and as to Black Rock, I could see how it must be one thing or the other.

We found Mrs. Mavor brave and bright. She shared Mr. Craig's anxiety, but not his gloom. Her courage was of that serene kind that refuses to believe defeat possible and lifts the spirit into the triumph of final victory. Through the past week she had been carefully disposing her forces and winning recruits. And yet she never seemed to urge or persuade the men ; but as evening after evening the miners dropped into the cozy room down-stairs, with her talk and her songs she charmed them till they were wholly hers. She took for granted their loyalty, trusted them utterly, and so made it difficult for them to be other than true men.

That night Mrs. Mavor's large storeroom, which had been fitted up with seats, was crowded with miners when Mr. Craig and I entered.

After a glance over the crowd Craig said: "There's the manager; that means war." And I saw a tall man, very fair, whose chin fell away to the vanishing point and whose hair was parted in the middle, talking to Mrs. Mavor. She was dressed in some rich soft stuff that became her well. She was looking beautiful as ever, but there was something quite new in her manner. Her air of good-fellowship was gone, and she was the high-bred lady, whose gentle dignity and sweet grace, while very winning, made familiarity impossible.

The manager was doing his best and appeared to be well pleased with himself.

"She'll get him if any one can. I failed," said Craig.

I stood looking at the men, and a fine lot of fellows they were. Free, easy, bold in their bearing, they gave no sign of rudeness; and from their frequent glances toward Mrs. Mavor, I could see they were always conscious of her presence. No men are so truly gentle as are the Westerners in the presence of a good woman. They were evidently of all classes and ranks originally, but now, and in this country of real measurements,

they ranked simply according to the "man" in them.

"See that handsome young chap of dissipated appearance?" said Craig. "That's Vernon Winton, an Oxford graduate, blue blood, awfully plucky, but quite gone. When he gets repentant, instead of shooting himself he comes to Mrs. Mavor. Fact."

"From Oxford University to Black Rock mining camp is something of a step," I replied.

"That queer-looking little chap in the corner is Billy Breen. How in the world has he got here?" went on Mr. Craig.

Queer-looking he was. A little man, with a small head set on heavy square shoulders, long arms, and huge hands that sprawled all over his body; altogether a most ungainly specimen of humanity.

By this time Mrs. Mavor had finished with the manager and was in the center of a group of miners. Her grand air was all gone and she was their comrade, their friend, one of themselves. Nor did she assume the *rôle* of entertainer, but rather did she, with half-shy air, cast herself upon their chivalry, and they were too truly gentlemen to fail her. It is hard to make Western men, and especially old-timers, talk. But this gift was hers, and it stirred my admiration

to see her draw on a grizzled veteran to tell how, twenty years ago, he had crossed the Great Divide, and had seen and done what no longer fell to men to see or do in these new days. And so she won the old-timer. But it was beautiful to see the innocent guile with which she caught Billy Breen and drew him to her corner near the organ. What she was saying I knew not, but poor Billy was protesting, waving his big hands.

The meeting came to order, with Shaw in the chair and the handsome young Oxford man secretary. Shaw stated the object of the meeting in a few halting words; but when he came to speak of the pleasure he and all felt in being together in that room, his words flowed in a stream, warm and full. Then there was a pause and Mr. Craig was called. But he knew better than to speak at that point. Finally Nixon rose hesitatingly, but as he caught a bright smile from Mrs. Mavor he straightened himself as for a fight.

"I ain't no good at making speeches," he began; "but it ain't speeches we want. We've got somethin' to do, an' what we want to know is how to do it. An' to be right plain, we want to know how to drive this cursed whisky out o' Black Rock. You all know what it's doin' fer us—at least fer some of us. An it's time to stop it now, or fer some of us it'll mighty soon be too

late. An' the only way to stop its work is to quit drinkin' it an' help others to quit. I hear some talk of a league, an' what I say is, if it's a league out an' out ag'inst whisky, a total abstinence right to the ground, then I'm with it. That's my talk. I move we make that kind o' league."

Nixon sat down amid cheers and a chorus of remarks. "Good man!" "That's the talk!" "Stay with it!" but he waited for the smile and the glance that came to him from the beautiful face in the corner, and with that he seemed content.

Again there was silence. Then the secretary rose with a slight flush upon his handsome, delicate face and seconded the motion. If they would pardon a personal reference he would give them his reasons. He had come to this country to make his fortune; now he was anxious to make enough to enable him to go home with some degree of honor. His home held everything that was dear to him. Between him and that home, between him and all that was good and beautiful and honorable, stood whisky. "I am ashamed to confess," and the flush deepened on his cheek and his lips grew thinner, "that I feel the need of some such league." His handsome face, his perfect style of address, learned possibly in the "Union," but, more than all, his show of nerve—

for these men knew how to value that—made a strong impression on his audience ; but there were no following cheers.

Mr. Craig appeared hopeful ; but on Mrs. Mavor's face there was a look of wistful, tender pity, for she knew how much the words had cost the lad.

Then up rose a sturdy, hard-featured man, with a burr in his voice that proclaimed his birth. His name was George Crawford, I afterward learned, but every one called him Geordie. He was a character in his way, fond of his glass ; but though he was never known to refuse a drink, he was never known to be drunk. He took his drink, for the most part, with bread and cheese in his own shack, or with a friend or two in a sober, respectable way, but never could be induced to join the wild carousals in Slavin's saloon. He made the highest wages, but was far too true a Scot to spend his money recklessly. Every one waited eagerly to hear Geordie's mind. He spoke solemnly, as befitted a Scotsman expressing a deliberate opinion, and carefully, as if choosing his best English, for when Geordie became excited no one in Black Rock could understand him.

“Maister Chairman,” said Geordie, “I'm aye for temperance in a' things.” There was a shout of laughter, at which Geordie gazed around in pained surprise. “I'll no' deny,” he went on in

an explanatory tone, "that I tak ma mornin', an' maybe a nip at noon, an' a wee drap aifter wark in the evenin', an' whiles a sip o' toddy wi' a freen thae cauld nichts. But I'm no' a guzzler, an' I dinna gang in wi' thae loons flingin' about guid money."

"An' that's throe for you, me bye," interrupted a rich Irish brogue, to the delight of the crowd and the amazement of Geordie, who went calmly on:

"An' I canna bide yon saloon whaur they sell sie awfu'-like stuff—it's mair like lye nor good whusky—and whaur ye're never sure o' yer richt change. It's an awfu'-like place. Mon!"—and Geordie began to warm up—"ye can juist smell the sulphur when ye gang in. But I dinna care about thae temperance socceities, wi' their pledges an' havers; an' I canna see what hairm can come till a mon by takin' a bottle o' guid Glenlivet hame wi' him. I canna bide thae teetotal buddies."

Geordie's speech was followed by loud applause, partly appreciative of Geordie himself, but largely sympathetic with his position.

Two or three men followed in the same strain, advocating a league for mutual improvement and social purposes, but without the teetotal pledge; they were against the saloon, but didn't see why they should not take a drink now and then.



Finally the manager rose to support his "friend Mistah—ah—Cwafoad," ridiculing the idea of a total abstinence pledge as fanatical and indeed "absuad." He was opposed to the saloon, and would like to see a club formed, with a comfortable club-room, books, magazines, pictures, games—anything, "dontcheknow, to make the time pass pleasantly;" but it was "absuad to ask men to abstain fwom a pwopah use of—aw—nouwishing dwinks"—because some men made beasts of themselves. He concluded by offering fifty dollars toward the support of such a club.

The current of feeling was setting strongly against the total abstinence idea, and Craig's face was hard and his eyes gleamed like coals. Then he did a bit of generalship. He proposed that since they had the two plans clearly before them they should take a few minutes' intermission in which to make up their minds, and he was sure they would be glad to have Mrs. Mavor sing. In the interval the men talked in groups, eagerly, even fiercely, hampered seriously in the forceful expression of their opinion by the presence of Mrs. Mavor, who glided from group to group, dropping a word here and a smile there. She reminded me of a general riding along the ranks, bracing his men for the coming battle. She paused beside Geordie, spoke earnestly for a few

moments, while Geordie gazed solemnly at her, and then she came back to Billy in the corner near me. What she was saying I could not hear, but poor Billy was protesting, spreading his hands out aimlessly before him, but gazing at her the while in dumb admiration. Then she came to me.

“Poor Billy, he was good to my husband,” she said softly, “and he has a good heart.”

“He’s not much to look at,” I could not help saying.

“The oyster hides its pearl,” she answered, a little reproachfully.

“The shell is apparent enough,” I replied, for the mischief was in me.

“Ah, yes,” she replied softly, “but it is the pearl we love.”

I moved over beside Billy, whose eyes were following Mrs. Mavor as she went to speak to Mr. Craig.

“Well,” I said, “you all seem to have a high opinion of her.”

“A ’igh hopinion?” he replied in deep scorn. “A ’igh hopinion, you calls it?”

“What would you call it?” I asked, wishing to draw him out.

“Oi don’t call it nothink,” he replied, spreading out his rough hands.

“She seems very nice,” I said, indifferently.

He drew his eyes away from Mrs. Mavor and gave attention to me for the first time.

“Nice!” he repeated with fine contempt; and then he added impressively: “Them as don’t know shouldn’t say nothink.”

“You are right,” I answered earnestly, “and I am quite of your opinion.”

He gave me a quick glance out of his little, deep-set, dark-blue eyes, and opened his heart to me. He told me, in his quaint speech, how again and again she had taken him in and nursed him and encouraged him, and sent him out with a new heart for his battle, until, for very shame’s sake at his own miserable weakness, he had kept out of her way for many months, going steadily down.

“Now, Oi hain’t got no grip; but when she says to me to-night, says she, ‘Oh, Billy’—she calls me Billy to myself” (this with a touch of pride)—“‘oh, Billy,’ says she, ‘we must ’ave a total habstinence league to-night, an’ Oi want you to ’elp!’ an’ she keeps a-lookin’ at me with those heyes o’ her’n till, if you believe me, sir,” lowering his voice to an emphatic whisper, “though Oi knowed Oi couldn’t ’elp none, afore Oi knowed Oi promised ’er Oi would. It’s ’er heyes. When them heyes says ‘do,’ hup you steps an’ ‘does.’”

I remembered my first look into her eyes, and I could quite understand Billy's submission. Just as she began to sing I went over to Geordie and took my seat beside him. She began with an English slumber song, "Sleep, Baby, Sleep"—one of Barry Cornwall's, I think—and then sang a love song with the refrain, "Love once again;" but no thrills came to me, and I began to wonder if her spell over me was broken. Geordie, who had been listening somewhat indifferently, encouraged me, however, by saying: "She's just pittin' aff time, with thae feckless sangs; mon, there's nae grup till them." But when, after a few minutes' pause, she began "My Ain Fireside," Geordie gave a sigh of satisfaction. "Aye, that's somethin' like," and when she finished the first verse he gave me a dig in the ribs with his elbow that took my breath away, saying in a whisper: "Mon, hear till yon, wull ye?" And again I found the spell upon me. It was not the voice, after all, but the great soul behind that thrilled and compelled. She was seeing, feeling, living what she sang, and her voice showed us her heart. The cozy fireside, with its bonnie, blithe blink, where no care could abide, but only peace and love, was vividly present to her, and as she sang we saw it too. When she came to the last verse—

“When I draw in my stool  
On my cozy hearthstane,  
My heart louns sae licht  
I scarce ken’t for my ain,”

there was a feeling of tears in the flowing song, and we knew the words had brought her a picture of the fireside that would always seem empty. I felt the tears in my eyes, and, wondering at myself, I cast a stealthy glance at the men about me; and I saw that they, too, were looking through their hearts’ windows upon firesides and ingle-nooks that gleamed from far.

And then she sang “The Auld Hoose,” and Geordie, giving me another poke, said, “That’s ma ain sang,” and when I asked him what he meant he whispered fiercely, “Wheesht, mon!” and I did, for his face looked dangerous.

In a pause between the verses I heard Geordie saying to himself: “Aye, I maun gie it up, I doot.”

“What?” I ventured.

“Naething ava.” And then he added impatiently, “Mon, but ye’re an inqueesitive buddie,” after which I subsided into silence.

Immediately upon the meeting being called to order Mr. Craig made his speech, and it was a fine bit of work. Beginning with a clear statement of the object in view, he set in contrast the

two kinds of leagues proposed. One, a league of men who would take whisky in moderation; the other, a league of men who were pledged to drink none themselves and to prevent in every honorable way others from drinking. There was no long argument, but he spoke at white heat; and as he appealed to the men to think, each not of himself alone, but of the others as well, the yearning, born of his long months of desire and of toil, vibrated in his voice and reached to the heart. Many men looked uncomfortable and uncertain, and even the manager looked none too cheerful.

At this critical moment the crowd got a shock. Billy Breen shuffled out to the front, and in a voice shaking with nervousness and emotion began to speak, his large, coarse hands wandering tremulously about.

“ Oi hain’t no bloomin’ temp’rance horator, an’ mayhap Oi hain’t no right to speak ’ere, but Oi got somethin’ to saigh [say] an’ Oi’m a-goin’ to saigh it.

“ Parson, ’e says is it wiskey or no wiskey in this ’ere club? If ye hask me, wich [which] ye don’t, then no wiskey, says Oi; an’ if ye hask why?—look at me! Once Oi could mine more coal than hany man in the camp; now Oi hain’t fit to be a sorter. Once Oi ’ad some pride an’ hambition; now Oi ’angs round a-waitin’ for some one to

saigh, ‘‘Ere, Billy, ‘ave summat.’ Once Oi made good paigh [pay], an’ sent it ‘ome reg’lar to my pore old mother (she’s in the wukus now, she is); Oi hain’t sent ‘er hany for a year an’ a ‘alf. Once Billy was a good fellow an’ ‘ad plenty o’ friends; now Slavin ‘isself kicks un hout, ‘e does. Why? why?’ His voice rose to a shriek. ‘‘Because when Billy ‘ad money in ‘is pocket, hevery man in this bloomin’ camp as meets un at hevery corner says, ‘‘Ello, Billy, wat’ll ye ‘ave?’ An’ there’s whisky at Slavin’s, an’ there’s whisky in the shacks, an’ hevery ‘oliday an’ hevery Sunday there’s whisky, an’ w’en ye feel bad it’s whisky, an’ w’en ye feel good it’s whisky, an’ heverywhere an’ halways it’s whisky, whisky, whisky! An’ now ye’re goin’ to stop it, an’ ‘ow? T’ manager, ‘e says picters an’ magazines. ‘E takes ‘is wine an’ ‘is beer like a gen’lman, ‘e does, an’ ‘e don’t ‘ave no use for Billy Breen. Billy, ‘e’s a beast, an’ t’ manager, ‘e kicks un hout. But supposin’ Billy wants to stop bein’ a beast an’ starts a-tryin’ to be a man agin, an’ w’en ‘e gits good an’ dry, along comes some un an’ says, ‘‘Ello, Billy, ‘ave a smile,’ it hain’t picters nor magazines ‘ud stop un then. Picters an’ magazines! Gawd ‘elp the man as hain’t nothin’ but picters an’ magazines to ‘elp un w’en ‘e’s got a devil hinside an’ a devil houtside a-shovin’ an’ a-drawin’ of un down to ‘ell. An’

that's w'ere Oi'm a-goin' straight, an' yer bloomin' league, wiskey or no wiskey, can't 'elp me. But," and he lifted his trembling hands above his head, "if ye stop the wiskey a-flowin' round this camp, ye'll stop some o' these lads that's a-follerin' me 'ard. Yes, you! an' you! an' you!" and his voice rose to a wild scream as he shook a trembling finger at one and another.

"Mon, it's fair grewsome tae hear him," said Geordie; "he's no' canny;" and reaching out for Billy as he went stumbling past, he pulled him down to a seat beside him, saying: "Sit doon, lad, sit doon. We'll mak a mon o' ye yet." Then he rose and, using many r's, said: "Maiser Chairman, I doot we'll juist hae to gie it up."

"Give it up?" called out Nixon. "Give up the league?"

"Na! na! lad, but juist the wee drap whusky. It's nae that guid, onyway, an' it's a terrible price. Mon, gin ye gang tae Henderson's in Buchanan Street, in Gleska, ye ken, ye'll get mair for three an' saxpence than ye wull at Slavin's for five dollars. An' it'll no' pit ye mad like yon stuff, but it gangs doon smooth an' saft-like. But" (regretfully) "ye no' can get it here; an' I'm thinkin' I'll juist sign yon teetotal thing." And up he strode to the table and put his name down in the book Craig had ready. Then to Billy



he said: "Come awa, lad! pit yer name doon, an' we'll stan' by ye."

Poor Billy looked around helplessly, his nerve all gone, and sat still. There was a swift rustle of garments, and Mrs. Mavor was beside him, and in a voice that only Billy and I could hear said:

"You'll sign with me, Billy?"

Billy gazed at her with a hopeless look in his eyes and shook his little head. She leaned slightly toward him, smiling brightly, and touching his arm gently said:

"Come, Billy, there's no fear," and in a lower voice, "God will help you."

As Billy went up, following Mrs. Mavor close, a hush fell on the men until he had put his name to the pledge; then they came up, man by man, and signed. But Craig sat with his head down till I touched his shoulder. He took my hand and held it fast, saying over and over, under his breath, "Thank God! thank God!"

**And so the league was made.**

## CHAPTER VI.

## BLACK ROCK RELIGION.

WHEN I grow weary with the conventions of religion and sick in my soul from feeding upon husks that the churches too often offer me in the shape of elaborate services and eloquent discourses, so that in my sickness I doubt and doubt, then I go back to the communion in Black Rock and the days preceding it, and the fever and the weariness leave me and I grow humble and strong. The simplicity and rugged grandeur of the faith, the humble gratitude of the rough men I see about the table, and the calm radiance of one saintly face rest and recall me.

Not its most enthusiastic apologist would call Black Rock a religious community, but it possessed in a marked degree that eminent Christian virtue of tolerance. All creeds, all shades of religious opinions were allowed, and it was generally conceded that one was as good as another. It is fair to say, however, that Black Rock's catholicity was negative rather than positive. The only religion objectionable was that insisted upon

as a necessity. It never occurred to any one to consider religion other than as a respectable, if not ornamental, addition to life in older lands.

During the weeks following the making of the league, however, this negative attitude toward things religious gave place to one of keen investigation and criticism. The indifference passed away, and with it, in a large measure, the tolerance. Mr. Craig was responsible for the former of these changes, but hardly, in fairness, could he be held responsible for the latter. If any one more than another was to be blamed for the rise of intolerance in the village, that man was Geordie Crawford. He had his "lines" from the Established Kirk of Scotland, and when Mr. Craig announced his intention of having the sacrament of the Lord's Supper observed, Geordie produced his "lines" and promptly handed them in. As no other man in the village was equipped with like spiritual credentials, Geordie constituted himself a kind of kirk session, charged with the double duty of guarding the entrance to the Lord's Table and of keeping an eye upon the theological opinions of the community, and more particularly upon such members of it as gave evidence of possessing any opinions definite enough for statement.

It came to be Mr. Craig's habit to drop into the

league room, and toward the close of the evening to have a short Scripture lesson from the gospels. Geordie's opportunity came after the meeting was over and Mr. Craig had gone away. The men would hang about and talk the lesson over, expressing opinions favorable or unfavorable as appeared to them good. Then it was that all sorts of views, religious and otherwise, were aired and examined. The originality of the ideas, the absolute disregard of the authority of church or creed, the frankness with which opinions were stated, and the forcefulness of the language in which they were expressed, combined to make the discussions altogether marvelous. The passage between Abe Baker, the stage driver, and Geordie was particularly rich. It followed upon a very telling lesson on the parable of the Pharisee and the publican.

The chief actors in that wonderful story were transferred to the Black Rock stage and were presented in miner's costume. Abe was particularly well pleased with the scoring of the "blanked old rooster who crowed so blanked high," and somewhat incensed at the quiet remark interjected by Geordie, that "it was nae credit till a mon tae be a sinner;" and when Geordie went on to urge the importance of right conduct and respectability, Abe was led to pour forth vials of contemptuous

wrath upon the Pharisees and hypocrites who thought themselves better than other people. But Geordie was quite unruffled and lamented the ignorance of men who, brought up in "Epeesco-pawlyun or Methody" churches, could hardly be expected to detect the Antinomian or Arminian heresies.

"Auntie Nomyun or Uncle Nomyun," replied Abe, boiling hot, "my mother was a Methodist, and I'll back any blanked Methodist against any blankety blank longfaced, lantern-jawed, skinflint Presbyterian," and this he was eager to maintain to any man's satisfaction if he would step outside.

Geordie was quite unmoved, but hastened to assure Abe that he meant no disrespect to his mother, who he had "nae doot was a clever enough buddie, tae judge by her son." Abe was speedily appeased and offered to set up the drinks all around. But Geordie, with evident reluctance, had to decline, saying, "Na, na, lad. I'm a league mon, ye ken," and I was sure that Geordie at that moment felt that membership in the league had its drawbacks.

Nor was Geordie too sure of Craig's orthodoxy; while as to Mrs. Mavor, whose slave he was, he was in the habit of lamenting her doctrinal condition:

“She’s a fine wumman, nae doot; but, puir cratur, she’s fair carried awa’ wi’ the errors o’ thae Epeescopawlyuns.”

It fell to Geordie, therefore, as a sacred duty, in view of the laxity of those who seemed to be the pillars of the church, to be all the more watchful and unyielding. But he was delightfully inconsistent when confronted with particulars. In conversation with him one night after one of the meetings, when he had been specially hard upon the ignorant and godless, I innocently changed the subject to Billy Breen, whom Geordie had taken to his shack since the night of the league. He was very proud of Billy’s success in the fight against whisky, the credit of which he divided unevenly between Mrs. Mavor and himself.

“He’s fair daft about her,” he explained to me, “an’ I’ll no’ deny but she’s a great help, aye, a verra conseederable asseestance; but, mon, she doesna ken the whusky an’ the inside o’ a man that’s wantin’ it. Aye, puir buddie, she diz her pairt, an’ when ye’re a bit restless an’ thrawn aifter yer day’s wark, it’s like a walk in a bonnie glen on a simmer eve, with the birds liltin’ about, tae sit in yon roomie an’ hear her sing; but when the night is on an’ ye canna sleep, but wauken wi’ an awfu’ thurst an’ wild dreams o’ cozy fire-sides an’ the bonnie sparklin’ glosses, as it is wi’

puir Billy, aye, it's then ye need a mon wi' a guid grup beside ye."

"What do you do then, Geordie?" I asked.

"Oo, aye, I juist gang for a bit walk wi' the lad, an' then pits the kettle on an' maks a cup o' tea or coffee, an' aff he gangs tae sleep like a bairn."

"Poor Billy," I said pityingly, "there's no hope for him in the future, I fear."

"Hoot awa, mon," said Geordie quickly. "Ye wadna keep oot a puir cratur frae creepin' in that's daein' his best?"

"But, Geordie," I remonstrated, "he doesn't know anything of the doctrines. I don't believe he could give us 'The Chief End of Man.'"

"An' wha's tae blame for that?" said Geordie with fine indignation. "An' maybe you remember the prood Pharisee an' the puir wumman that cam' creepin' in ahint the Maister."

The mingled tenderness and indignation in Geordie's face were beautiful to see, so I meekly answered:

"Well, I hope Mr. Craig won't be too strict with the boys."

Geordie shot a suspicious glance at me, but I kept my face like a summer morn, and he replied cautiously:

"Aye, he's no' that streect; but he maun exercee discreemination."

Geordie was none the less determined, however, that Billy should "come forrit"; but as to the manager, who was a member of the English Church, and some others who had been confirmed years ago and had forgotten much and denied more, he was extremely doubtful, and expressed himself in very decided words to the minister:

"Ye'll no' be askin' forrit thae Epeescopawlyun buddies. They juist ken naething ava."

But Mr. Craig looked at him for a moment and said, "'Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out,'" and Geordie was silent, though he continued doubtful.

With all these somewhat fantastic features, however, there was no mistaking the earnest spirit of the men. The meetings grew larger every night and the interest became more intense. The singing became different. The men no longer simply shouted, but as Mr. Craig would call attention to the sentiment of the hymn the voices would attune themselves to the words. Instead of encouraging anything like emotional excitement, Mr. Craig seemed to fear it.

"These chaps are easily stirred up," he would say, "and I am anxious that they should know exactly what they are doing. It is far too serious a business to trifle with."



Although Graeme did not go down-stairs to the meetings, he could not but feel the throb of the emotion beating in the heart of the community. I used to detail for his benefit, and sometimes for his amusement, the incidents of each night. But I never felt quite easy in dwelling upon the humorous features in Mrs. Mavor's presence, although Craig did not appear to mind. His manner with Graeme was perfect. Openly anxious to win him to his side, he did not improve the occasion and vex him with exhortation. He would not take him at a disadvantage, though, as I afterward found, this was not his sole reason for his method. Mrs. Mavor, too, showed herself in wise and tender light. She might have been his sister, so frank was she and so openly affectionate, laughing at his fretfulness and soothing his weariness.

Never were better comrades than we four, and the bright days speeding so swiftly on drew us nearer to one another.

But the bright days came to an end, for Graeme, when once he was able to go about, became anxious to get back to the camp. And so the last day came, a day I remember well. It was a bright, crisp winter day.

The air was shimmering in the frosty light. The mountains, with their shining heads piercing

through light clouds into that wonderful blue of the western sky and their feet pushed into the pine masses, gazed down upon Black Rock with calm, kindly looks on their old gray faces. How one grows to love them, steadfast old friends ! Far up among the pines we could see the smoke of the engine at the works, and so still and so clear was the mountain air that we could hear the puff of the steam and from far down the river the murmur of the rapids. The majestic silence, the tender beauty, the peace, the loneliness, too, came stealing in upon us as we three, leaving Mrs. Mavor behind us, marched arm in arm down the street. We had not gone far on our way, when Graeme, turning round, stood a moment looking back, then waved his hand in farewell. Mrs. Mavor was at her window, smiling and waving in return. They had grown to be great friends, these two, and seemed to have arrived at some understanding. Certainly Graeme's manner to her was not that he bore to other women. His half-quizzical, somewhat superior air of mocking devotion gave place to a simple, earnest almost tender respect very new to him, but very winning.

As he stood there waving his farewell, I glanced at his face and saw for a moment what I had not seen for years, a faint flush on Graeme's cheek and a light of simple, earnest faith in his eyes. It

reminded me of my first look of him when he had come up for his matriculation to the 'varsity. He stood on the campus looking up at the noble old pile, and there was the same bright, trustful, earnest look on his boyish face.

I know not what spirit possessed me; it may have been the pain of the memory working in me, but I said, coarsely enough, "It's no use, Graeme, my boy. I would fall in love with her myself, but there would be no chance even for me."

The flush slowly darkened as he turned and said deliberately :

"It's not like you, Connor, to be an ass of that peculiar kind. Love!—not exactly! She won't fall in love unless——"

And he stopped abruptly with his eyes upon Craig.

But Craig met him with unshrinking gaze, quietly remarking, "Her heart is under the pines;" and we moved on, each thinking his own thoughts and guessing at the thoughts of the others.

We were on our way to Craig's shack, and as we passed the saloon Slavin stepped from the door with a salutation. Graeme paused.

"Hello, Slavin! I got rather the worst of it, didn't I?"

Slavin came near and said earnestly :

"It was a dirty thrick altogether. You'll not think it was moine, Mr. Graeme."

"No, no, Slavin! You stood up like a man," said Graeme cheerfully.

"An' you bate me fair; an' bedad it was a nate one that laid me out; an' there's no grudge in me heart till ye."

"All right, Slavin. We'll perhaps understand each other better after this."

"An' that's thrue for yez, sor; an' I'll see that your byes don't get anny more than they ask for," replied Slavin, backing away.

"And I hope that won't be much," put in Mr. Craig; but Slavin only grinned.

When we came to Craig's shack Graeme was glad to rest in the big chair.

Craig made him a cup of tea, while I smoked, admiring much the deft neatness of the minister's housekeeping and the gentle, almost motherly way he had with Graeme.

In our talk we drifted into the future, and Craig let us see what were his ambitions. The railroad was soon to come. The resources were, as yet, unexplored, but enough was known to assure a great future for British Columbia. As he talked his enthusiasm grew and carried us away. With the eye of a general he surveyed the country, fixed the strategic points which the Church must

seize upon. Eight good men would hold the country from Fort Steele to the coast and from Kootenay to Cariboo.

"The Church must be in with the railroad. She must have a hand in the shaping of the country. If society crystallizes without her influence the country is lost, and British Columbia will be another trapdoor to the bottomless pit."

"What do you propose?" I asked.

"Organizing a little congregation here in Black Rock."

"How many will you get?"

"Don't know."

"Pretty hopeless business," I said.

"Hopeless! hopeless!" he cried. "There were only twelve of us at first to follow Him, and rather a poor lot they were. But He braced them up and they conquered the world."

"But surely things are different," said Graeme.

"Things? Yes! yes! But He is the same."

His face had an exalted look, and his eyes were gazing into far-away places.

"A dozen men in Black Rock with some real grip of Him would make things go. We'll get them, too," he went on in growing excitement. "I believe in my soul we'll get them."

"Look here, Craig: if you organize I'd like to join," said Graeme impulsively. "I don't believe

much in your creed or your Church, but I'll be blowed if I don't believe in you."

Craig looked at him with wistful eyes and shook his head.

"It won't do, old chap, you know. I can't hold you. You've got to have a grip of some one better than I am; and then, besides, I hardly like asking you now"—he hesitated—"well, to be out-and-out, this step must be taken not for my sake nor for any man's sake, and I fancy that perhaps you feel like pleasing me just now a little."

"That I do, old fellow," said Graeme, putting out his hand. "I'll be hanged if I won't do anything you say."

"That's why I won't say," replied Craig. Then reverently he added: "The organization is not mine. It is my Master's."

"When are you going to begin?" asked Graeme.

"We shall have our communion service in two weeks, and that will be our roll-call."

"How many will answer?" I asked doubtfully.

"I know of three," he said quietly.

"Three! There are two hundred miners and one hundred and fifty lumbermen! Three!" and Graeme looked at him in amazement. "You think it worth while to organize three?"

“ Well,” replied Craig, smiling for the first time, “ the organization won’t be elaborate, but it will be effective, and, besides, loyalty demands obedience.”

We sat long that afternoon talking, shrinking from the breaking up ; for we knew that we were about to turn down a chapter in our lives which we should delight to linger over in after days. And in my life there is but one brighter. At last we said good-by and drove away, and though many farewells have come in between that day and this, none is so vividly present to me as that between us three men. Craig’s manner with me was solemn enough.

“ ‘He that loveth his life.’ Good-by. Don’t fool with this,” was what he said to me.

But when he turned to Graeme his whole face lighted up. He took him by the shoulders and gave him a little shake, looking into his eyes and saying over and over in a low, sweet tone :

“ You’ll come, old chap, you’ll come, you’ll come. Tell me you’ll come.”

And Graeme could say nothing in reply, but only looked at him. Then they silently shook hands and we drove off. But long after we had got over the mountain and into the winding forest road on the way to the lumber camp the voice kept vibrating in my heart, “ You’ll come, you’ll come,” and there was a hot pain in my throat.

We said little during the drive to the camp. Graeme was thinking hard, and made no answer when I spoke to him two or three times till we came to the deep shadows of the pine forest, when with a little shiver he said :

“ It is all a tangle—a hopeless tangle.”

“ Meaning what ? ” I asked.

“ This business of religion. What quaint varieties : Nelson’s, Geordie’s, Billy Breen’s—if he has any ; then Mrs. Mavor’s—she is a saint, of course ; and that fellow Craig’s. What a trump he is ! and without his religion he’d be pretty much like the rest of us. It is too much for me.”

His mystery was not mine. The Black Rock varieties of religion were certainly startling, but there was undoubtedly the streak of reality through them all, and that discovery I felt to be a distinct gain.



## CHAPTER VII.

## THE FIRST BLACK ROCK COMMUNION.

THE gleam of the great fire through the windows of the great camp gave a kindly welcome as we drove into the clearing in which the shanties stood. Graeme was greatly touched at his enthusiastic welcome by the men. At the supper-table he made a little speech of thanks for their faithfulness during his absence, specially commending the care and efficiency of Mr. Nelson, who had had charge of the camp. The men cheered wildly, Baptiste's shrill voice leading all. Nelson, being called upon, expressed in a few words his pleasure at seeing the boss back, and thanked the men for their support while he had been in charge.

The men were for making a night of it; but fearing the effect upon Graeme, I spoke to Nelson, who passed the word, and in a short time the camp was quiet. As we sauntered from the grub camp to the office where was our bed, we paused to take in the beauty of the night. The moon rode high over the peaks of the mountains,

flooding the narrow valley with mellow light. Under her magic the rugged peaks softened their harsh lines and seemed to lean lovingly toward us. The dark pine masses stood silent as in breathless adoration; the dazzling snow lay like a garment over all the open spaces in soft waving folds, and crowned every stump with a quaintly shaped nightcap. Above the camps the smoke curled up from the camp-fires, standing like pillars of cloud that kept watch while men slept. And high over all the deep blue night sky, with its star jewels, sprang like the roof of a great cathedral from range to range, covering us in its kindly shelter. How homelike and safe seemed the valley with its mountain sides, its sentinel tree, and arching roof of jeweled sky! Even the night seemed kindly, and friendly the stars; and the lone cry of the wolf from the deep forest seemed like the voice of a comrade.

“How beautiful! too beautiful!” said Graeme, stretching out his arms. “A night like this takes the heart out of me.”

I stood silent, drinking in at every sense the night with its wealth of loveliness.

“What is it I want?” he went on. “Why does the night make my heart ache? There are things to see and things to hear just beyond me I cannot get to them.”

The gay, careless look was gone from his face, his dark eyes were wistful with yearning.

“I often wonder if life has nothing better for me,” he continued with his heart-ache voice.

I said no word, but put my arm within his. A light appeared in the stable. Glad of a diversion, I said :

“What is the light ? Let us go and see.”

“Sandy taking a last look at his team, like enough.”

We walked slowly toward the stable, speaking no word. As we neared the door we heard the sound of a voice in the monotone of one reading. I stepped forward and looked through a chink between the logs. Graeme was about to open the door, but I held up my hand and beckoned him to me. In a vacant stall, where was a pile of straw, a number of men were grouped. Sandy, leaning against the tying-post upon which the stable-lantern hung, was reading ; Nelson was kneeling in front of him and gazing into the gloom beyond ; Baptiste lay upon his stomach, his chin in his hands and his upturned eyes fastened upon Sandy's face ; Lachlan Campbell sat with his hands clasped about his knees, and two other men sat near him. Sandy was reading the undying story of the prodigal, Nelson now and then stopping him to make a remark. It was a scene I have

never been able to forget. To-day I pause in my tale, and see it as clearly as when I looked through the chink upon it years ago. The long, low stable with log walls and upright hitching-poles; the dim outlines of the horses in the gloom of the background, and the little group of rough, almost savage-looking men, with faces wondering and reverent, lighted by the misty light of the stable-lantern.

After the reading Sandy handed the book to Nelson, who put it in his pocket, saying :

“That’s for us, boys, ain’t it ?”

“Aye,” said Lachlan. “It is often that has been read in my hearing, but I am afraid it will not be for me whatever,” and he swayed himself slightly as he spoke, and his voice was full of pain.

“The minister said I might come,” said old Nelson earnestly and hopefully.

“Aye, but you are not Lachlan Campbell, and you have not had his privileges. My father was a godly elder in the Free Church of Scotland, and never a night or morning but we took the Books.”

“Yes, but He said ‘any man,’” persisted Nelson, putting his hand on Lachlan’s knee. But Lachlan shook his head.

“Dat young feller,” said Baptiste ; “wha’s hees nem, heh ?”

“He has no name. It is just a parable,” explained Sandy.

“He’s got no nem? He’s just a paromble? Das no young feller?” asked Baptiste anxiously; “das mean notting?”

Then Nelson took him in hand and explained to him the meaning, while Baptiste listened even more eagerly, ejaculating softly: “Ah, *voilà! bon!* by gar!” When Nelson had finished he broke out: “Dat young feller, his name Baptiste, heh? an’ de old Fadder, he’s *le bon Dieu!* *Bon!* das good story for me. How you go back? You go to de pries’?”

“The book doesn’t say priest or any one else,” said Nelson. “You go back in yourself, you see?”

“*Non*; das so, sure nuff. Ah!”—as if a light broke in upon him—“you go in your own self. You make one leetle prayer. You say, ‘*Le bon Fadder, oh! I want come back, I so tire, so hon-gree, so sorree?*’ He say, ‘Come right ’long.’ Ah! das fuss rate. Nelson, you make one leetle prayer for Sandy an’ me.”

And Nelson lifted up his face and said:

“Father, we’re all gone far away; we have spent all, we are poor, we are tired of it all; we want to feel different, to be different; we want to come back. Jesus came to save us from our sins, and He said if we came He wouldn’t cast us

out, no matter how bad we were, if we only came to Him. Oh, Jesus Christ"—and his old, iron face began to work and two big tears slowly came from under his eyelids—"we are a poor lot, and I'm the worst of the lot, and we are trying to find the way. Show us how to get back. Amen."

"*Bon!*" said Baptiste. "Das fetch Him, sure!"

Graeme pulled me away, and without a word we went into the office and drew up to the little stove. Graeme was greatly moved.

"Did you ever see anything like that?" he asked. "Old Nelson! the hardest, savagest, toughest old sinner in the camp, on his knees before a lot of men!"

"Before God," I could not help saying, for the thing seemed very real to me. The old man evidently felt himself talking to some one.

"Yes, I suppose you're right," said Graeme doubtfully; "but there's a lot of stuff I can't swallow."

"When you take medicine you don't swallow the bottle," I replied, for his trouble was not mine.

"If I were sure of the medicine I wouldn't mind the bottle, and yet it acts well enough," he went on. "I don't mind Lachlan. He's a Highland mystic and has visions, and Sandy's almost as bad, and Baptiste is an impulsive little chap. Those don't count much. But old man Nelson is

a cool-blooded, level-headed old fellow ; has seen a lot of life, too. And then there's Craig. He has a better head than I have and is as hot-blooded, and yet he is living and slaving away in that hole, and really enjoys it. There must be something in it."

"Oh, look here, Graeme," I burst out impatiently, "what's the use of your talking like that? Of course there's something in it. There's everything in it. The trouble with me is I can't face the music. It calls for a life where a fellow must go in for straight, steady work, self-denial, and that sort of thing; and I'm too Bohemian for that and too lazy. But that fellow Craig makes one feel horribly uncomfortable."

Graeme put his head on one side and examined me curiously.

"I believe you're right about yourself. You always were a luxurious beggar. But that's not where it catches me."

We sat and smoked and talked of other things for an hour and then turned in. As I was dropping off I was roused by Graeme's voice :

"Are you going to the preparatory service on Friday night?"

"Don't know," I replied rather sleepily.

"I say, do you remember the preparatory service at home?"

There was something in his voice that set me wide awake.

"Yes. Rather terrific, wasn't it? But I always felt better after it," I replied.

"To me"—he was sitting up in bed now—"to me it was like a call to arms, or rather like a call for a forlorn hope. None but volunteers wanted. Do you remember the thrill in the old governor's voice as he dared any but the right stuff to come on?"

"We'll go in on Friday night," I said.

And so we did. Sandy took a load of men with his team and Graeme and I drove in the light sleigh.

The meeting was in the church and over a hundred men were present. There was some singing of familiar hymns at first, and then Mr. Craig read the same story as we had heard in the stable, that most perfect of all parables, the Prodigal Son. Baptiste nudged Sandy in delight and whispered something, but Sandy held his face so absolutely expressionless that Graeme was moved to say :

"Look at Sandy! Did you ever see such a graven image? Something has hit him hard."

The men were held fast by the story. The voice of the reader, low, earnest, and thrilling with the tender pathos of the tale, carried the



words to our hearts, while a glance, a gesture, a movement of the body gave us the vision of it all as he was seeing it.

Then, in simplest of words, he told us what the story meant, holding us the while with eyes, and voice, and gesture. He compelled us to scorn the gay, heartless selfishness of the young fool setting forth so jauntily from the broken home ; he moved our pity and our sympathy for the young profligate, who, broken and deserted, had still pluck enough to determine to work his way back, and who, in utter desperation, at last gave it up ; and then he showed us the home-coming—the ragged, heart-sick tramp, with hesitating steps, stumbling along the dusty road, and then the rush of the old father, his garments fluttering and his voice heard in broken cries. I see and hear it all now whenever the words are read.

He announced the hymn, “Just as I am,” read the first verse, and then went on :

“There you are, men, every man of you, somewhere on the road. Some of you are too lazy”—here Graeme nudged me—“and some of you haven’t enough yet of the far country to come back. May there be a chance for you when you want to come ! Men, you all want to go back home, and when you go you’ll want to put on your soft

clothes, and you won't go till you can go in good style ; but where did the prodigal get his good clothes ? ”

Quick came the answer in Baptiste's shrill voice :

“From de ole fadder !”

No one was surprised, and the minister went on :

“Yes ! and that's where we must get the good, clean heart, the good, clean, brave heart—from our Father. Don't wait, but just as you are, come. Sing.”

They sang, not loud, as they would “Stand Up,” or even “The Sweet By and By,” but in voices subdued, holding down the power in them.

After the singing Craig stood a moment gazing down at the men and then said quietly :

“Any man want to come? You all might come. We all must come.”

Then, sweeping his arm over the audience and turning half round as if to move off, he cried, in a voice that thrilled to the heart's core :

“Oh ! come on ! Let's go back !”

The effect was overpowering. It seemed to me that the whole company half rose to their feet. Of the prayer that immediately followed I only caught the opening sentence, “Father, we

are coming back," for my attention was suddenly absorbed by Abe, the stage driver, who was sitting next me. I could hear him swearing approval and admiration, saying to himself:

"Ain't he a clinker! I'll be gee-whizzly-goldusted if he ain't a malleable-iron-dcuble-back action self-adjusting corn-cracker."

And the prayer continued to be punctuated with like admiring and even more sulphurous expletives. It was an incongruous medley. The earnest, reverent prayer and the earnest, admiring profanity rendered chaotic one's ideas of religious propriety. The feelings in both were akin; the method of expression somewhat widely diverse.

After prayer Craig's tone changed utterly. In a quiet, matter-of-fact, business-like way he stated his plan of organization, and called for all who wished to join to remain after the benediction. Some fifty men were left, among them Nelson, Sandy, Lachlan Campbell, Baptiste, Shaw, Nixon, Geordie, and Billy Breen, who tried to get out, but was held fast by Geordie.

Graeme was passing out, but I signed him to remain, saying that I wished "to see the thing out." Abe sat still beside me, swearing disgustedly at the fellows "who were going back on the preacher." Craig appeared amazed at the

number of men remaining, and seemed to fear that something was wrong. He put before them the terms of discipleship, as the Master put them to the eager scribe, and he did not make them easy. He pictured the kind of work to be done and the kind of men needed for the doing of it. Abe grew uneasy as the minister went on to describe the completeness of the surrender, the intensity of the loyalty demanded.

"That knocks me out, I reckon," he muttered in a disappointed tone. "I ain't up to that grade." And as Craig described the heroism called for, the magnificence of the fight, the worth of it, and the outcome of it all, Abe ground out: "I'll be blanked if I wouldn't like to take a hand, but I guess I'm not in it." Craig finished by saying:

"I want to put this quite fairly. It is not any league of mine; you're not joining my company; it is no easy business, and it is for your whole life. What do you say? Do I put it fairly? What do you say, Nelson?"

Nelson rose slowly and with difficulty began:

"I may be all wrong, but you made it easier for me, Mr. Craig. You said He would see me through, or I should never have risked it. Perhaps I am wrong," and the old man looked troubled.

Craig sprang up.

"No! no! Thank God, no! He will see every man through who will trust his life to Him. Every man, no matter how tough he is, no matter how broken."

Then Nelson straightened himself up and said:

"Well, sir! I believe a lot of the men would go in for this if they were dead sure they would get through."

"Get through!" said Craig; "never a fear of it. It is a hard fight, a long fight, a glorious fight," throwing up his head, "but every man who squarely trusts Him and takes Him as Lord and Master comes out victor!"

"*Bon!*" said Baptiste. "Das me. You tink He's take me in dat fight, M'sieu Craig, heh?"

His eyes were blazing.

"You mean it?" asked Craig almost sternly.

"Yes! by gar!" said the little Frenchman eagerly.

"Hear what He says, then;" and Craig, turning over the leaves of his Testament, read solemnly the words, "Swear not at all."

"*Non!* For sure! Den I stop him," replied Baptiste earnestly, and Craig wrote his name down.

Poor Abe looked amazed and distressed, rose slowly, and saying, "That jars my whisky jug,"

passed out. There was a slight movement near the organ, and glancing up I saw Mrs. Mavor put her face hastily in her hands. The men's faces were anxious and troubled, and Nelson said in a voice that broke: "Tell them what you told me, sir." But Craig was troubled, too, and replied, "You tell them, Nelson!" and Nelson told the men the story of how he began just five weeks ago. The old man's voice steadied as he went on, and he grew eager as he told how he had been helped, and how the world was all different and his heart seemed new. He spoke of his Friend as if He were some one that could be seen out at camp, that he knew well and met every day.

But as he tried to say how deeply he regretted that he had not known all this years before, the old, hard face began to quiver and the steady voice wavered. Then he pulled himself together and said:

"I begin to feel sure He'll pull me through—me! the hardest man in the mountains! So don't you fear, boys. He's all right."

Then the men gave in their names one by one. When it came to Geordie's turn he gave his name:

"George Crawford, frae the pairish o' Kilsyth, Scotland, an' ye'll juist pit doon the lad's name.

Maister Craig. He's a wee bit fashed wi' the discourse, but he has the root o' the matter in him, I doot."

And so Billy Breen's name went down.

When the meeting was over thirty-eight names stood upon the communion roll of the Black Rock Presbyterian Church; and it will ever be one of the regrets of my life that neither Graeme's name nor my own appeared on that roll. And two days after, when the cup went round on that first communion Sabbath, from Nelson to Sandy and from Sandy to Baptiste, and so on down the line to Billy Breen and Mrs. Mavor, and then to Abe, the driver, whom she had by her own mystic power lifted into hope and faith, I felt all the shame and pain of a traitor; and I believe in my heart that the fire of that pain and shame burned something of the selfish cowardice out of me, and that it is burning still.

The last words of the minister in the short address after the table had been served were low, and sweet, and tender, but they were words of high courage; and before he had spoken them all the men were listening with shining eyes, and when they rose to sing the closing hymn they stood straight and stiff like soldiers on parade.

And I wished more than ever I were one of them.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE BREAKING OF THE LEAGUE.

THERE is no doubt in my mind that nature designed me for a great painter. A railroad director interfered with that design of nature, as he has with many another of hers, and by the transmission of an order for mountain pieces by the dozen, together with a check so large that I feared there was some mistake, he determined me to be an illustrator and designer for railroad and like publications. I do not like these people ordering "by the dozen." Why should they not consider an artist's finer feelings? Perhaps they cannot understand them; but they understand my pictures and I understand their checks, and there we are quits. But so it came that I remained in Black Rock long enough to witness the breaking of the league.

Looking back upon the events of that night from the midst of gentle and decent surroundings, they now seem strangely unreal, but to me then they appeared only natural.

It was the Good Friday ball that wrecked the



league. For the fact that the promoters of the ball determined that it should be a ball rather than a dance was taken by the league men as a concession to the new public opinion in favor of respectability created by the league. And when the managers' patronage had been secured (they failed to get Mrs. Mavor's), and it was further announced that though held in the Black Rock Hotel ball-room—indeed, there was no other place—refreshments suited to the peculiar tastes of league men would be provided, it was felt to be almost a necessity that the league should approve, should indeed welcome, this concession to the public opinion in favor of respectability created by the league.

There were extreme men on both sides, of course. Idaho Jack, professional gambler, for instance, frankly considered that the whole town was going to unmentionable depths of propriety. The organization of the league was regarded by him and by many others as a sad retrograde toward the bondage of the ancient and dying East; and that he could not get drunk when and where he pleased, "Idaho," as he was called, regarded as a personal grievance.

But Idaho was never enamored of the social ways of Black Rock. He was shocked and disgusted when he discovered that a "gun" was created by British law to be an unnecessary a

ment on a card-table. The manner of his discovery must have been interesting to behold.

It is said that Idaho was industriously pursuing his avocation in Slavin's, with his "gun" lying upon the card-table convenient to his hand, when in walked Policeman Jackson, her majesty's sole representative in the Black Rock district. Jackson, "Stonewall Jackson," or "Stonewall," as he was called for obvious reasons, after watching the game for a few moments gently tapped the pistol and asked what he used this for.

"I'll show you in two holy minutes if you don't light out," said Idaho, hardly looking up, but very angrily, for the luck was against him. But Jackson tapped upon the table and said sweetly:

"You're a stranger here. You ought to get a guidebook and post yourself. Now, the boys know I don't interfere with an innocent little game, but there is a regulation against playing it with guns; so," he added even more sweetly, but fastening Idaho with a look from his steel-gray eyes, "I'll just take charge of this," picking up the revolver; "it might go off."

Idaho's rage, great as it was, was quite swallowed up in his amazed disgust at the state of society that would permit such an outrage upon personal liberty. He was quite unable to play any more that evening, and it took several drinks all round

to restore him to articulate speech. The rest of the night was spent in retailing for his instruction stories of the ways of Stonewall Jackson.

Idaho bought a new "gun," but he wore it "in his clothes" and used it chiefly in the pastime of shooting out the lights or in picking off the heels from the boys' boots while a stag dance was in progress in Slavin's. But in Stonewall's presence Idaho was a most correct citizen. Stonewall he could understand and appreciate. He was six feet three and had an eye of unpleasant penetration. But this new feeling in the community for respectability he could neither understand nor endure.

The league became the object of his indignant aversion and the league men of his contempt. He had many sympathizers, and frequent were the assaults upon the newly-born sobriety of Billy Breen and others of the league. But Geordie's watchful care and Mrs. Mavor's steady influence, together with the loyal co-operation of the league men, kept Billy safe so far. Nixon, too, was a marked man. It may be that he carried himself with unnecessary jauntiness toward Slavin and Idaho, saluting the former with "Awful dry weather! eh, Slavin?" and the latter with "Hello, old sport! how's times?" causing them to swear deeply, and, as it turned out, to do more than swear

But on the whole the anti-league men were in favor of a respectable ball, and most of the league men determined to show their appreciation of the concession of the committee to the principles of the league in the important matter of refreshments by attending in force.

Nixon would not go. However jauntily he might talk, he could not trust himself, as he said, where whisky was flowing, for it got into his nose "like a fish-hook into a salmon." He was from Nova Scotia. For like reason Vernon Winton, the young Oxford fellow, would not go. When they chaffed his lips grew a little thinner and the color deepened in his handsome face, but he went on his way. Geordie despised the "hale hypothick" as a "daft ploy," and the spending of five dollars upon a ticket he considered a "sinfu' waste o' guid siller;" and he warned Billy against "coontenancin' ony sic redeeklus nonsense."

But no one expected Billy to go, although the last two months he had done wonders for his personal appearance and for his position in the social scale as well. They all knew what a fight he was making and esteemed him accordingly. How well I remember the pleased pride in his face when he told me in the afternoon of the committee's urgent request that he should join the orchestra with his 'cello! It was not simp-

that his 'cello was his joy and pride, but he felt it to be a recognition of his return to respectability.

I have often wondered how things combine at times to a man's destruction.

Had Mr. Craig not been away at the Landing that week, had Geordie not been on the night shift, had Mrs. Mavor not been so occupied with the care of her sick child, it may be Billy might have been saved his fall.

The anticipation of the ball stirred Black Rock and the camps with a thrill of expectant delight. Nowadays, when I find myself forced to leave my quiet smoke in my studio after dinner at the call of some social engagement which I have failed to elude, I groan at my hard lot, and I wonder as I look back and remember the pleasurable anticipation with which I viewed the approaching ball. But I do not wonder now, any more than I did then, at the eager delight of the men who for seven days in the week swung their picks up in the dark breasts of the mines, or who chopped and sawed among the solitary silences of the great forests. Any break in the long and weary monotony was welcome. What mattered the cost or consequence? To the rudest and least cultured of them the sameness of the life must have been hard to bear; but what it was to

men who had seen life in its most cultured and attractive forms I fail to imagine. From the mine, black and foul, to the shack, bare, cheerless, and sometimes hideously repulsive, life swung in heart-grinding monotony till the longing for a "big drink" or some other "big break" became too great to bear.

It was well on toward evening when Sandy's four-horse team, with a load of men from the woods, came swinging round the curves of the mountain road and down the street. A gay crowd they were with their bright, brown faces and hearty voices; and in ten minutes the whole street seemed alive with lumbermen—they had a faculty of spreading themselves so. After night fell the miners came down "done up slick," for this was a great occasion and they must be up to it. The manager appeared in evening dress; but this was voted "too giddy" by the majority.

As Graeme and I passed up to the Black Rock Hotel, in the large storeroom of which the ball was to be held, we met old man Nelson looking very grave.

"Going, Nelson, aren't you?" I said.

"Yes," he answered slowly. "I'll drop in, though I don't like the look of things much."

"What's the matter, Nelson?" asked Graeme cheerily. "There's no funeral on."

"Perhaps not," replied Nelson, "but I wish Mr. Craig were home." And then he added: "There's Idaho and Slavin together, and you may bet the devil isn't far off."

But Graeme laughed at his suspicion and we passed on. The orchestra was tuning up. There were two violins, a concertina, and the 'cello. Billy Breen was lovingly fingering his instrument, now and then indulging himself in a little snatch of some air that came to him out of his happier past. He looked perfectly delighted, and as I paused to listen he gave me a proud glance out of his deep, little, blue eyes, and went on playing softly to himself. Presently Shaw came along.

"That's good, Billy," he called out. "You've got the trick yet, I see."

But Billy only nodded and went on playing.

"Where's Nixon?" I asked.

"Gone to bed," said Shaw, "and I am glad of it. He finds that the safest place on pay-day afternoon. The boys don't bother him there."

The dancing-room was lined on two sides with beer-barrels and whisky-kegs. At one end the orchestra sat; at the other a table with refreshments, where the "soft drinks" might be had. Those who wanted anything else might pass through a short passage into the bar just behind.

This was evidently a superior kind of ball, for the men kept on their coats and went through the various figures with faces of unnatural solemnity. But the strain upon their feelings was quite apparent, and it became a question how long it could be maintained. As the trips through the passageway became more frequent the dancing grew in vigor and hilarity, until by the time supper was announced the stiffness had sufficiently vanished to give no further anxiety to the committee.

But the committee had other cause for concern, inasmuch as after supper certain of the miners appeared with their coats off and proceeded to "knock the knots out of the floor" in break-down dances of extraordinary energy. These, however, were beguiled into the bar-room and "filled up" for safety, for the committee were determined that the respectability of the ball should be preserved to the end. Their reputation was at stake, not in Black Rock only, but at the Landing as well, from which most of the ladies had come; and to be ashamed in the presence of the Landing people could not be borne. Their difficulties seemed to be increasing, for at this point something seemed to go wrong with the orchestra. The 'cello appeared to be wandering aimlessly up and down the scale, occasionally picking up the



tune with animation and then dropping it. As Billy saw me approaching he drew himself up with great solemnity, gravely winked at me, and said :

“ Shlipped a cog, Mister Connor! Mosh hunfortunate! Beauchiful hinstrument, but shlips a cog. Mosh hunfortunate ! ”

And he wagged his head a little sagely, playing all the while for dear life, now second and now lead.

Poor Billy! I pitied him, but I thought chiefly of the beautiful, eager face that leaned toward him the night the league was made and of the bright voice that said, “ You’ll sign with me, Billy ? ” and it seemed to me a cruel deed to make him lose his grip of life and hope ; for this is what the pledge meant to him.

While I was trying to get Billy away to some safe place I heard a great shouting in the direction of the bar, followed by tramping and scuffling of feet in the passageway. Suddenly a man burst through, crying :

“ Let me go! Stand back! I know what I’m about ! ”

It was Nixon, dressed in his best : black clothes, blue shirt, red tie, looking handsome enough, but half drunk and wildly excited. The Highland fling competition was on at the moment, and

Angus Campbell, Lachlan's brother, was representing the lumber camps in the contest. Nixon looked on approvingly for a few moments, then with a quick movement he seized the little Highlander, swung him in his powerful arms clean off the floor, and deposited him gently upon a beer-barrel. Then he stepped into the center of the room, bowed to the judges, and began a sailor's hornpipe.

The committee were perplexed, but after deliberation they decided to humor the new competitor, especially as they knew that Nixon with whisky in him was unpleasant to cross.

Lightly and gracefully he went through his steps, the men crowding in from the bar to admire, for Nixon was famed for his hornpipe. But when, after the hornpipe, he proceeded to execute a clog dance, garnished with acrobatic feats, the committee interfered. There were cries of "Put him out!" and "Let him alone! Go on, Nixon!" And Nixon hurled back into the crowd two of the committee who had laid remonstrating hands upon him, and standing in the open center, cried out scornfully :

"Put me out! Put me out! Certainly! Help yourselves! Don't mind me!" Then grinding his teeth, so that I heard them across the room, he added with savage deliberation: "If any

man lays a finger on me I'll—I'll eat his liver cold."

He stood for a few moments glaring round upon the company and then strode toward the bar, followed by the crowd wildly yelling. The ball was forthwith broken up. I looked around for Billy, but he was nowhere to be seen. Graeme touched my arm.

"There's going to be something of a time, so just keep your eyes skinned."

"What are you going to do?" I asked.

"Do? Keep myself beautifully out of trouble," he replied.

In a few moments the crowds came surging back headed by Nixon, who was waving a whisky-bottle over his head and yelling as one possessed.

"Hello!" exclaimed Graeme softly, "I begin to see. Look there!"

"What's up?" I asked.

"You see Idaho and Slavin and their pets," he replied. "They've got poor Nixon in tow. Idaho is rather nasty," he added, "but I think I'll take a hand in this game. I've seen some of Idaho's work before."

The scene was one quite strange to me and was wild beyond description. A hundred men filled the room. Bottles were passed from hand to hand and men drank their fill. Behind the re-

freshment tables stood the hotelman and his bar-keeper with their coats off and sleeves rolled up to the shoulder, passing out bottles and drawing beer and whisky from two kegs hoisted up for that purpose. Nixon was in his glory. It was his night. Every man was to get drunk at his expense, he proclaimed, flinging down bills upon the table. Near him were some league men he was treating liberally, and never far away were Idaho and Slavin passing bottles, but evidently drinking little.

I followed Graeme, not feeling too comfortable, for this sort of thing was new to me, but admiring the cool assurance with which he made his way through the crowd that swayed and yelled and swore and laughed in a most disconcerting manner.

“Hello!” shouted Nixon as he caught sight of Graeme. “Here you are!” passing him a bottle. “You’re a knocker, a double-handed front-door knocker. You polished off old whisky-soak here, old demijohn,” pointing to Slavin, “and I’ll lay five to one we can lick any blankety blank thieves in the crowd,” and he held up a roll of bills.

But Graeme proposed that he should give the hornpipe again, and the floor was cleared at once, for Nixon’s hornpipe was very popular, and tonight, of course, was in high favor. In the midst

of his dance Nixon stopped short, his arms dropped to his side, his face had a look of fear, of horror.

There, before him, in his riding-cloak and boots, with his whip in his hand as he had come from his ride, stood Mr. Craig. His face was pallid and his dark eyes were blazing with fierce light. As Nixon stopped Craig stepped forward to him, and sweeping his eyes round upon the circle, he said in tones intense with scorn :

“ You cowards ! You get a man where he’s weak ! Cowards ! You’d damn his soul for his money ! ”

There was a dead silence, and Craig, lifting his hat, said solemnly :

“ May God forgive you this night’s work ! ”

Then, turning to Nixon and throwing his arm over his shoulder, he said in a voice broken and husky :

“ Come on, Nixon. We’ll go. ”

Idaho made a motion as if to stop him, but Graeme stepped quickly forward and said sharply, “ Make way there, can’t you ? ” and the crowd fell back and we four passed through, Nixon walking as in a dream, with Craig’s arm about him. Down the street we went in silence and on to Craig’s shack, where we found old man Nelson, with the fire blazing and strong coffee

steaming on the stove. It was he that had told Craig, on his arrival from the Landing, of Nixon's fall.

There was nothing of reproach, but only gentlest pity, in tone and touch, as Craig placed the half-drunk, dazed man in his easy-chair, took off his boots, brought him his own slippers, and gave him coffee. Then, as his stupor began to overcome him, Craig put him in his own bed and came forth with a face written over with grief.

"Don't mind, old chap," said Graeme kindly.

But Craig looked at him without a word, and, throwing himself into a chair, put his face in his hands. As we sat there in silence the door was suddenly pushed open and in walked Abe Baker with the words, "Where is Nixon?" and we told him where he was. We were still talking when again a tap came to the door, and Shaw came in looking much disturbed.

"Did you hear about Nixon?" he asked.

We told him what we knew.

"But did you hear how they got him?" he asked excitedly.

As he told us the tale the men stood listening, with faces growing hard.

It appeared that after the making of the league the Black Rock Hotel man had bet Idaho one

hundred to fifty that Nixon could not be got to drink before Easter. All Idaho's schemes had failed, and now he had only three days in which to win his money, and the ball was his last chance. Here again he was balked, for Nixon, resisting all entreaties, barred his shack door and went to bed before nightfall, according to his invariable custom on pay-days. At midnight some of Idaho's men came battering at the door for admission, which Nixon reluctantly granted. For half an hour they used every art of persuasion to induce him to go down to the ball, the glorious success of which was glowingly depicted; but Nixon remained immovable, and they took their departure, baffled and cursing. In two hours they returned drunk enough to be dangerous, kicked at the door in vain, finally gained entrance through the window, hauled Nixon out of bed, and holding a glass of whisky to his lips bade him drink. But he knocked the glass away, spilling the liquor over himself and the bed.

It was drink or fight, and Nixon was ready to fight; but after parley they had a drink all round and fell to persuasion again. The night was cold, and poor Nixon sat shivering on the edge of his bed. If he would take one drink they would leave him alone. He need not show himself so stiff. The whisky fumes filled his nostrils.

If one drink would get them off, surely that was better than fighting and killing some one or getting killed. He hesitated, yielded, drank his glass. They sat about him amiably drinking and lauding him as a fine fellow, after all. One more glass before they left. Then Nixon rose, dressed himself, drank all that was left of the bottle, put his money in his pocket, and came down to the dance, wild with his old-time madness, reckless of faith and pledge, forgetful of home, wife, babies, his whole being absorbed in one great passion—to drink and drink and drink till he could drink no more.

Before Shaw had finished his tale Craig's eyes were streaming with tears, and groans of rage and pity broke alternately from him. Abe remained speechless for a time, not trusting himself; but as he heard Craig groan, "Oh, the beasts! the fiends!" he seemed encouraged to let himself loose, and he began swearing with the coolest and most blood-curdling deliberation. Craig listened with evident approval, apparently finding complete satisfaction in Abe's performance, when suddenly he seemed to waken up, caught Abe by the arm, and said in a horror-stricken voice:

"Stop! stop! God forgive us! We must not swear like this."



Abe stopped at once, and in a surprised and slightly grieved voice said :

“Why, what’s the matter with that? Ain’t that what you wanted?”

“Yes! yes! God forgive me! I am afraid it was,” he answered hurriedly; “but I must not.”

“Oh, don’t you worry,” went on Abe cheerfully. “I’ll look after that part; and, anyway, ain’t they the blankest blankety blank——” going off again into a roll of curses, till Craig, in an agony of entreaty, succeeded in arresting the flow of profanity possible to no one but a mountain stage driver. Abe paused, looking hurt, and asked if they did not deserve everything he was calling down upon them.

“Yes, yes,” urged Craig; “but that is not our business.”

“Well, so I reckoned,” replied Abe, recognizing the limitations of the cloth. “You ain’t used to it, and you can’t be expected to do it; but it just makes me feel good—let out o’ school like—to properly do ’em up, the blank, blank——” and off he went again. It was only under the pressure of Mr. Craig’s prayers and commands that he finally agreed “to hold in, though it was tough.”

“What’s to be done?” asked Shaw.

“Nothing,” answered Craig bitterly.

He was exhausted with his long ride from the Landing and broken with bitter disappointment over the ruin of all that he had labored so long to accomplish.

“Nonsense,” said Graeme. “There’s a good deal to do.”

It was agreed that Craig should remain with Nixon while the others of us should gather up what fragments we could find of the broken league. We had just opened the door, when we met a man striding up at a great pace. It was Geordie Crawford.

“Hae ye seen the lad?” was his salutation.

No one replied. So I told Geordie of my last sight of Billy in the orchestra.

“An’ did ye no’ gang aifter him?” he asked in indignant surprise, adding with some contempt: “Mon! but ye’re a feckless buddie.”

“Billy gone too!” said Shaw. “They might have let Billy alone.”

Poor Craig stood in a dumb agony. Billy’s fall seemed more than he could bear. We went out, leaving him heart-broken amid the ruins of his league.

## CHAPTER IX.

## THE LEAGUE'S REVENGE.

As we stood outside of Craig's shack in the dim starlight we could not hide from ourselves that we were beaten. It was not so much grief as a blind fury that filled my heart, and looking at the faces of the men about me I read the same feeling there. But what could we do? The yells of carousing miners down at Slavin's told us that nothing could be done with them that night. To be so utterly beaten, and unfairly, and with no chance of revenge, was maddening.

"I'd like to get back at 'em," said Abe, carefully repressing himself.

"I've got it, men," said Graeme suddenly. "This town does not require all the whisky there is in it." And he unfolded his plan. It was to gain possession of Slavin's saloon and the bar of the Black Rock Hotel, and clear out all the liquor to be found in both these places. I did not much like the idea; and Geordie said:

"I'm ga'en aifter the lad. I'll hae naethin'

tae dae wi' yon. It's no' that easy, an' it's a sin-fu' waste."

But Abe was wild to try it and Shaw was quite willing, while old Nelson sternly approved.

"Nelson, you and Shaw get a couple of our men and attend to the saloon. Slavin and the whole gang are up at the Black Rock, so you won't have much trouble; but come to us as soon as you can."

And so we went our ways.

Then followed a scene the like of which I can never hope to see again, and it was worth a man's seeing. But there were times that night when I wished I had not agreed to follow Graeme in his plot.

As we went up to the hotel I asked Graeme:

"What about the law of this?"

"Law!" he replied indignantly. "They haven't troubled much about law in the whisky business here. They get a keg of high wine and some drugs and begin operations. No!" he went on; "if we can get the crowd out and ourselves in we'll make them break the law in getting us out. The law won't trouble us over smuggled whisky. It will be a great lark, and they won't crow too loud over the league."

I did not like the undertaking at first, but as I thought of the whole wretched illegal business

flourishing upon the weakness of the men in the mines and camps, whom I had learned to regard as brothers, and especially as I thought of the cowards that did for Nixon, I let my scruples go and determined, with Abe, "to get back at 'em."

We had no difficulty getting them out. Abe began to yell. Some men rushed out to learn the cause. He seized the foremost man, making a hideous uproar all the while, and in three minutes had every man out of the hotel and a lively row going on.

In two minutes more Graeme and I had the door to the ball-room locked and barricaded with empty casks. We then closed the door of the bar-room leading to the outside. The bar-room was a strongly built log shack, with a heavy door secured, after the manner of the early cabins, with two strong oak bars, so that we felt safe from attack from that quarter.

The ball-room we could not hold long, for the door was slight and entrance was possible through the windows. But as only a few casks of liquor were left there, our main work would be in the bar, so that the fight would be to hold the passageway. This we barricaded with casks and tables. But by this time the crowd had begun to realize what had happened and were wildly yelling at door and windows. With an ax which

Graeme had brought with him the casks were soon stove in and left to empty themselves.

As I was about to empty the last cask Graeme stopped me, saying: "Let that stand here. It will help us." And so it did. "Now skip for the barricade," yelled Graeme as a man came crashing through the window. Before he could regain his feet, however, Graeme had seized him and flung him out upon the heads of the crowd outside. But through the other windows men were coming in, and Graeme rushed for the barricade, followed by two of the enemy, the foremost of whom I received at the top and hurled back upon the others.

"Now, be quick!" said Graeme. "I'll hold this. Don't break any bottles on the floor—throw them out there," pointing to a little window high up in the wall.

I made all haste. The casks did not take much time, and soon the whisky and beer were flowing over the floor. It made me think of Geordie's regret over the "sinfu' waste." The bottles took longer, and glancing up now and then I saw that Graeme was being hard pressed. Men would leap, two and three at a time, upon the barricade, and Graeme's arms would shoot out, and over they would topple upon the heads of those nearest. It was a great sight to see him standing alone

with a smile on his face and the light of battle in his eye, coolly meeting his assailants with those terrific, lightning-like blows. In fifteen minutes my work was done.

"What next?" I asked. "How do we get out?"

"How is the door?" he replied.

I looked through the port-hole and said:

"A crowd of men waiting."

"We'll have to make a dash for it, I fancy," he replied cheerfully, though his face was covered with blood and his breath was coming in short gasps.

"Get down the bars and be ready."

But even as he spoke a chair hurled from below caught him on the arm, and before he could recover a man had cleared the barricade and was upon him like a tiger. It was Idaho Jack.

"Hold the barricade," Graeme called out as they both went down.

I sprang to his place, but I had not much hope of holding it long. I had the heavy oak bar of the door in my hands, and swinging it round my head I made the crowd give back for a few moments.

Meantime Graeme had shaken off his enemy, who was circling about him upon his tiptoes with a long knife in his hand, waiting for a chance to spring.

"I have been waiting for this for some time, Mr. Graeme," he said, smiling.

"Yes," replied Graeme, "ever since I spoiled your cut-throat game in 'Frisco. How is the little one?" he added sarcastically.

Idaho's face lost its smile and became distorted with fury as he replied, spitting out his words:

"She—is—where you will be before I am done with you."

"Ah! you murdered her too! You'll hang some beautiful day, Idaho," said Graeme as Idaho sprang upon him.

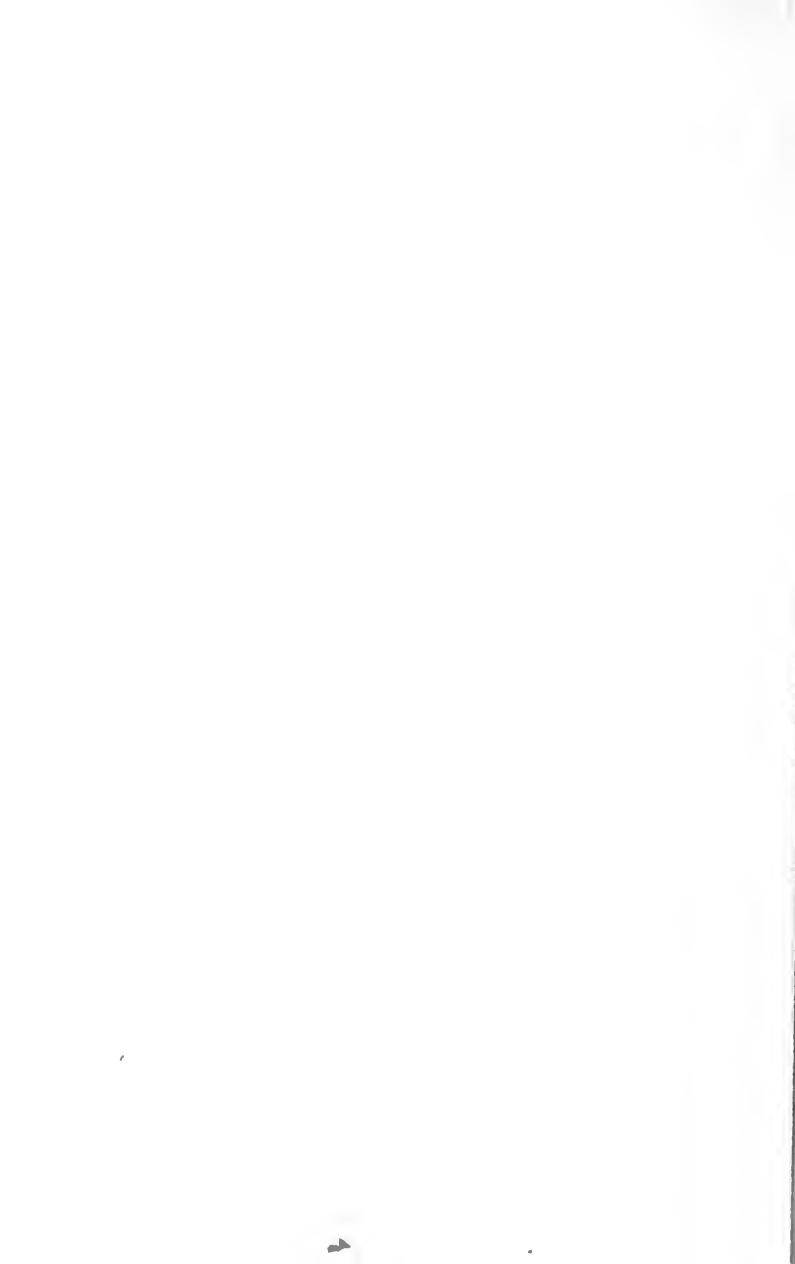
Graeme dodged his blow and caught his forearm with his left hand and held up high the murderous knife. Back and forward they swayed over the floor, slippery with whisky, the knife held high in the air. I wondered why Graeme did not strike, and then I saw his right hand hung limp from the wrist. The men were crowding upon the barricade. I was in despair. Graeme's strength was going fast. With a yell of exultant fury Idaho threw himself with all his weight upon Graeme, who could only cling to him. They swayed together toward me, but as they fell I brought down my bar upon the upraised hand and sent the knife flying across the room. Idaho's howl of rage and pain was mingled with a shout from below, and there, dashing the crowd





Nearer and nearer his outstretched fingers came to the knife,  
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—*Black Rock.*



to right and left, came old Nelson, followed by Abe, Sandy, Baptiste, Shaw, and others. As they reached the barricade it crashed down and, carrying me with it, pinned me fast.

Looking out between the barrels, I saw what froze my heart with horror. In the fall Graeme had wound his arms about his enemy and held him in a grip so deadly that he could not strike; but Graeme's strength was failing, and when I looked I saw that Idaho was slowly dragging both across the slippery floor to where the knife lay. Nearer and nearer his outstretched fingers came to the knife. In vain I yelled and struggled. My voice was lost in the awful din and the barricade held me fast. Above me, standing on a barrel-head, was Baptiste, yelling like a demon. In vain I called to him. My fingers could just reach his foot, and he heeded not at all my touch. Slowly Idaho was dragging his almost unconscious victim toward the knife. His fingers were touching the blade point, when, under a sudden inspiration, I pulled out my penknife, opened it with my teeth, and drove the blade into Baptiste's foot. With a blood-curdling yell he sprang down and began dancing round in his rage, peering among the barrels.

"Look! look!" I was calling in agony and pointing. "For Heaven's sake, look, Baptiste!"

The fingers had closed upon the knife, the knife was already high in the air, when, with a shriek, Baptiste cleared the room at a bound, and before the knife could fall, the little Frenchman's boot had caught the uplifted wrist and sent the knife flying to the wall.

Then there was a great rushing sound as of wind through the forest, and the lights went out. When I awoke I found myself lying with my head on Graeme's knees and Baptiste sprinkling snow on my face. As I looked up Graeme leaned over me, and, smiling down into my eyes, he said :

“ Good boy ! It was a great fight, and we put it up well ; ” and then he whispered : “ I owe you my life, my boy . ”

His words thrilled my heart through and through, for I loved him as only men can love men ; but I only answered :

“ I could not keep them back . ”

“ It was well done , ” he said ; and I felt proud .

I confess I was thankful to be so well out of it, for Graeme got off with a bone in his wrist broken and I with a couple of ribs cracked ; but had it not been for the open barrel of whisky which kept them occupied for a time, offering too good a chance to be lost, and for the timely arrival of Nelson, neither of us had ever seen the light again.

We found Craig sound asleep upon his couch.

His consternation on waking to see us torn, bruised, and bloody was laughable; but he hastened to find us warm water and bandages, and we soon felt comfortable.

Baptiste was radiant with pride and light over the fight and hovered about Graeme and me, giving vent to his feelings in admiring French and English expletives. But Abe was disgusted because of the failure at Slavin's; for when Nelson looked in he saw Slavin's French-Canadian wife in charge, with her baby on her lap, and he came back to Shaw and said, "Come away; we can't touch this;" and Shaw, after looking in, agreed that nothing could be done. A baby held the fort.

As Craig listened to the account of the fight he tried hard not to approve, but he could not keep the gleam out of his eyes; and as I pictured Graeme dashing back the crowd thronging the barricade till he was brought down by the chair, Craig laughed gently and put his hand on Graeme's knee. And as I went on to describe my agony while Idaho's fingers were gradually nearing the knife, his face grew pale and his eyes grew wide with horror.

"Baptiste, here, did the business," I said, and the little Frenchman nodded complacently and said:

“Dat’s me for sure.”

“By the way, how is your foot?” asked Graeme.

“He’s fuss rate. Dat’s what you call—one bite of—of—dat leel bees. He’s dere, you put your finger dere, he’s not dere—what you call him?”

“Flea!” I suggested.

“*Oui!*” cried Baptiste. “Dat’s one bite of flea.”

“I was thankful I was under the barrels,” I replied, smiling.

“*Oui!* Dat’s mak’ me ver’ mad. I jump an’ swear mos’ awful bad. Dat’s pardon me, M’sieu Craig, heh?”

But Craig only smiled at him rather sadly.

“It was awfully risky,” he said to Graeme, “and it was hardly worth it. They’ll get more whisky, and anyway the league is gone.”

“Well,” said Graeme with a sigh of satisfaction, “it is not quite such a one-sided affair as it was.”

And we could say nothing in reply, for we could hear Nixon snoring in the next room, and no one had heard of Billy, and there were others of the league that we knew were even now down at Slavin’s. It was thought best that all should remain in Mr. Craig’s shack, not knowing what might happen; and so we lay where we could and we needed none to sing us to sleep.

When I awoke, stiff and sore, it was to find breakfast ready and old man Nelson in charge. As we were seated Craig came in, and I saw that he was not the man of the night before. His courage had come back, his face was quiet, and his eye clear; he was his own man again.

“Geordie has been out all night, but has failed to find Billy,” he announced quietly.

We did not talk much. Graeme and I worried with our broken bones, and the others suffered from a general morning depression. But after breakfast, as the men were beginning to move, Craig took down his Bible, and saying, “Wait a few minutes, men!” he read slowly, in his beautiful clear voice, that psalm for all fighters—

“God is our refuge and strength,”

and so on to the nobler words—

“The Lord of Hosts is with us ;

The God of Jacob is our refuge.”

How the mighty words pulled us together, lifted us till we grew ashamed of our ignoble rage and of our ignoble depression !

And then Craig prayed in simple, straight-going words. There was acknowledgment of failure, but I knew he was thinking chiefly of himself ; and there was gratitude, and that was for the men about him, and I felt my face burn with shame ;

and there was petition for help, and we all thought of Nixon, and Billy, and the men wakening from their debauch at Slavin's this pure, bright morning. And then he asked that we might be made faithful and worthy of God, whose battle it was. Then we all stood up and shook hands with him in silence, and every man knew a covenant was being made. But none saw his meeting with Nixon. He sent us all away before that.

Nothing was heard of the destruction of the hotel stock in trade. Unpleasant questions would certainly be asked, and the proprietor decided to let bad alone. On the point of respectability the success of the ball was not conspicuous, but the anti-league men were content if not jubilant.

Billy Breen was found by Geordie late in the afternoon in his own old and deserted shack, breathing heavily, covered up in his filthy, moldering bedclothes, with a half-empty bottle of whisky at his side. Geordie's grief and rage were beyond even his Scotch control. He spoke few words, but these were of such concentrated vehemence that no one felt the need of Abe's assistance in vocabulary.

Poor Billy! We carried him to Mrs. Mavor's home, put him in a warm bath, rolled him in blankets, and gave him little sips of hot water,



then of hot milk and coffee, as I had seen a clever doctor in the hospital treat a similar case of nerve and heart depression. But the already weakened system could not recover from the awful shock of the exposure following the debauch, and on Sunday afternoon we saw that his heart was failing fast. All day the miners had been dropping in to inquire after him, for Billy had been a great favorite in other days, and the attention of the town had been admiringly centered upon his fight of these last weeks. It was with no ordinary sorrow that the news of his condition was received. As Mrs. Mavor sang to him his large coarse hands moved in time to the music, but he did not open his eyes till he heard Mr. Craig's voice in the next room; then he spoke his name, and Mr. Craig was kneeling beside him in a moment. The words came slowly :

“ Oi tried—to fight it hout—but—Oi got beat. Hit 'urts to think 'E's hashamed o' me. Oi'd like t' a-done better—Oi would.”

“ Ashamed of you, Billy!” said Craig in a voice that broke. “ Not He.”

“ An'—ye hall—'elped me so!” he went on. “ Oi wish Oi'd a-done better—Oi do,” and his eyes sought Geordie and then rested on Mrs. Mavor, who smiled back at him with a world of love in her eyes.

“You hain’t ashamed o’ me—yore heyes saigh so,” he said, looking at her.

“No, Billy,” she said, and I wondered at her steady voice, “not a bit. Why, Billy, I am proud of you.”

He gazed up at her with wonder and ineffable love in his little eyes, then lifted his hand slightly toward her. She knelt quickly and took it in both of hers, stroking it and kissing it.

“Oi hought t’ a-done better. Oi’m hawful sorry Oi went back on ’Im. Hit was the lemonade. The boys didn’t mean no ’arm—but hit started the ’ell hinside.”

Geordie hurled out some bitter words.

“Don’t be ’ard on ’em, Geordie. They didn’t mean no ’arm,” he said, and his eyes kept waiting till Geordie said hurriedly :

“Na! na! lad—I’ll juist leave them till the Almichty.”

Then Mrs. Mavor sang softly, smoothing his hand, “Just as I am,” and Billy dozed quietly for half an hour.

When he awoke again his eyes turned to Mr. Craig, and they were troubled and anxious.

“Oi tried ’ard. Oi wanted to win,” he struggled to say.

By this time Craig was master of himself, and he answered in a clear, distinct voice :

“Listen, Billy! You made a great fight and you are going to win yet. And besides, do you remember the sheep that got lost over the mountains?” This parable was Billy’s special delight. “He didn’t beat it when He got it, did He? He took it in His arms and carried it home. And so He will you.”

And Billy, keeping his eyes fastened on Mr. Craig, simply said :

“Will ’E?”

“Sure!” said Craig.

“Will ’E?” he repeated, turning his eyes upon Mrs. Mavor.

“Why, yes, Billy,” she answered cheerily, though the tears were streaming from her eyes. “I would, and He loves you far more.”

He looked at her, smiled, and closed his eyes. I put my hand on his heart; it was fluttering feebly. Again a troubled look passed over his face.

“My—poor—hold—mother,” he whispered; “she’s—hin—the—wukus.”

“I shall take care of her, Billy,” said Mrs. Mavor in a clear voice, and again Billy smiled.

Then he turned his eyes to Mr. Craig, and from him to Geordie, and at last to Mrs. Mavor, where they rested. She bent over and kissed him twice on the forehead.

"Tell 'er," he said with difficulty, "'E's took me 'ome."

"Yes, Billy!" she cried, gazing into his glazing eyes.

He tried to lift her hand. She kissed him again. He drew one deep breath and lay quite still.

"Thank the blessed Saviour!" said Mr. Craig reverently. "He has taken him home."

But Mrs. Mavor held the dead hand tight and sobbed out passionately :

"Oh, Billy! Billy! You helped me once when I needed help! I cannot forget!"

And Geordie, groaning, "Aye, laddie, laddie," passed out into the fading light of the early evening.

Next day no one went to work, for to all it seemed a sacred day. They carried him into the little church, and there Mr. Craig spoke of his long, hard fight and of his final victory; for he died without a fear and with love to the men who, not knowing, had been his death. And there was no bitterness in any heart, for Mr. Craig read the story of the sheep and told how gently He had taken Billy home; but though no word was spoken, it was there the league was made again.

They laid him under the pines beside Lewis Mavor, and the miners threw sprigs of evergreen into the open grave. When Slavin, sobbing

bitterly, brought his sprig, no one stopped him, though all thought it strange.

As we turned to leave the grave the light from the evening sun came softly through the gap in the mountains, and filling the valley touched the trees and the little mound beneath with glory. And I thought of that other glory, which is brighter than the sun, and was not sorry that poor Billy's weary fight was over ; and I could not help agreeing with Craig that it was there the league had its revenge.

## CHAPTER X.

## WHAT CAME TO SLAVIN.

BILLY BREEN's legacy to the Black Rock mining camp was a new league, which was more than the old league remade. The league was new in its spirit and in its methods. The impression made upon the camp by Billy Breen's death was very remarkable, and I have never been quite able to account for it. The mood of the community at the time was peculiarly susceptible. Billy was one of the oldest of the old-timers. His decline and fall had been a long process, and his struggle for life and manhood was striking enough to arrest the attention and awaken the sympathy of the whole camp. We instinctively side with a man in his struggle for freedom, for we feel that freedom is native to him and to us. The sudden collapse of the struggle stirred the men with a deep pity for the beaten man and a deep contempt for those who had tricked him to his doom. But though the pity and the contempt remained, the gloom was relieved and the sense of defeat removed from the men's minds by the transforming

glory of Billy's last hour. Mr. Craig, reading of the tragedy of Billy's death, transfigured defeat into victory, and this was generally accepted by the men as the true reading, though to them it was full of mystery. But they could all understand and appreciate at full value the spirit that breathed through the words of the dying man: "Don't be 'ard on 'em. They didn't mean no 'arm." And this was the new spirit of the league.

It was this spirit that surprised Slavin into sudden tears at the grave's side. He had come braced for curses and vengeance, for all knew it was he who had doctored Billy's lemonade, and instead of vengeance the message from the dead that echoed through the voice of the living was one of pity and forgiveness.

But the days of the league's negative, defensive warfare were over. The fight was to the death, and now the war was to be carried into the enemy's country. The league men proposed a thoroughly equipped and well-conducted coffee-room, reading-room, and hall, to parallel the enemy's lines of operation and defeat them with their own weapons upon their own ground. The main outlines of the scheme were clearly defined and were easily seen, but the perfecting of the details called for all Craig's tact and good sense. When, for instance, Vernon Winton, who had

charge of the entertainment department, came for Craig's opinion as to a minstrel troupe and private theatricals, Craig was prompt with his answer :

"Anything clean goes."

"A nigger show?" asked Winton.

"Depends upon the niggers," replied Craig with a gravely comic look, shrewdly adding: "Ask Mrs. Mavor."

And so the League Minstrel and Dramatic Company became an established fact, and proved, as Craig afterward told me, "a great means of grace to the camp."

Shaw had charge of the social department, whose special care it was to see that the men were made welcome to the cozy, cheerful reading-room, where they might chat, smoke, read, write, or play games, according to fancy.

But Craig felt that the success or failure of the scheme would largely depend upon the character of the resident manager, who, while caring for reading-room and hall, would control and operate the important department represented by the coffee-room.

"At this point the whole business may come to grief," he said to Mrs. Mavor, without whose counsel nothing was done.

"Why come to grief?" she asked brightly.

"Because if we don't get the right man that's



what will happen," he replied in a tone that spoke of anxious worry.

"But we shall get the right man, never fear." Her serene courage never faltered. "He will come to us."

Craig turned and gazed at her in frank admiration and said:

"If I only had your courage!"

"Courage!" she answered quickly. "It is not for you to say that."

And at his answering look the red came into her cheek and the depths in her eyes glowed, and I marveled and wondered, looking at Craig's cool face, whether his blood were running evenly through his veins. But his voice was quiet—a shade too quiet, I thought—as he gravely replied:

"I would often be a coward but for the shame of it."

And so the league waited for the man to come who was to be resident manager and make the new enterprise a success. And come he did; but the manner of his coming was so extraordinary that I have believed in the doctrine of a special providence ever since; for as Craig said: "If he had come straight from heaven I could not have been more surprised."

While the league was thus waiting its interest centered upon Slavin, chiefly because he repre-

sented more than any other the forces of the enemy; and though Billy Breen stood between him and the vengeance of the angry men who would have made short work of him and his saloon, nothing could save him from himself, and after the funeral Slavin went to his bar and drank whisky as he had never drunk before. But the more he drank the fiercer and gloomier he became, and when the men drinking with him chaffed him, he swore deeply and with such threats that they left him alone.

It did not help Slavin, either, to have Nixon stride in through the crowd drinking at his bar and give him words of warning.

"It is not your fault, Slavin," he said in slow, cool voice, "that you and your precious crew didn't send me to my death, too. You've won your bet, but I want to say that next time, though you are seven to one, or ten times that, when any of you boys offer me a drink I'll take you to mean fight, and I'll not disappoint you, and some one will be killed."

And so saying he strode out again, leaving a mean-looking crowd of men behind him. All who had not been concerned in the business at Nixon's shack expressed approval of his position and hoped he would "see it through."

But the impression of Nixon's words upon

Slavin was as nothing compared with that made by Geordie Crawford. It was not what he said so much as the manner of awful solemnity he carried. Geordie was struggling conscientiously to keep his promise to "not be 'ard on the boys," and found considerable relief in remembering that he had agreed "to leave them tae the Almighty." But the manner of leaving them was so solemnly awful that I could not wonder that Slavin's superstitious Irish nature supplied him with supernatural terrors.

It was the second day after the funeral that Geordie and I were walking toward Slavin's. There was a great shout of laughter as we drew near.

Geordie stopped short, and saying, "We'll just gang in a meenute," passed through the crowd and up to the bar.

"Michael Slavin," began Geordie, and the men stared in dead silence, with their glasses in their hands—"Michael Slavin, I promised the lad I'd bear ye nae ill-wull, but juist leave ye tae the Almighty; an' I want tae tell ye that I'm keepin' ma wur-r-d. But"—and here he raised his hand and his voice became preternaturally solemn—"his bluid is upon yer han's. Do ye no' see it?"

His voice rose sharply, and as he pointed Slavin instinctively glanced at his hands, and

Geordie added: "Aye, an' the Lord will require it o' you an' yer hoose."

They told me that Slavin shivered as if taken with ague after Geordie went out, and though he laughed and swore, he did not stop drinking till he sank into a drunken stupor and had to be carried to bed. His little French-Canadian wife could not understand the change that had come over her husband.

"He's like one bear," she confided to Mrs. Mavor, to whom she was showing her baby of a year old. "He's not kees me one tam dis day. He's most hawful bad. He's not even look at de baby."

And this seemed sufficient proof that something was seriously wrong; for she went on to say:

"He's tink more for dat leel baby dan for de whole worl'; he's tink more for dat baby dan for me," but she shrugged her pretty little shoulders in deprecation of her speech.

"You must pray for him," said Mrs. Mavor, "and all will come right."

"Ah! madame!" she replied earnestly, "every day, every day I pray *la sainte Vierge et tous les saints* for him."

"You must pray to your Father in heaven for him."

“ Ah ! *oui* ! I weel pray,” and Mrs. Mavor sent her away bright with smiles and with new hope and courage in her heart.

She had very soon need of all her courage, for at the week’s end her baby fell dangerously ill. Slavin’s anxiety and fear were not relieved much by the reports the men brought him from time to time of Geordie’s ominous forebodings, for Geordie had no doubt but that the Avenger of Blood was hot upon Slavin’s trail ; and as the sickness grew he became confirmed in this conviction. While he could not be said to find satisfaction in Slavin’s impending affliction, he could hardly hide his complacency in the promptness of Providence in vindicating his theory of retribution.

But Geordie’s complacency was somewhat rudely shocked by Mr. Craig’s answer to his theory one day.

“ You read your Bible to little profit, it seems to me, Geordie, or perhaps you have never read the Master’s teaching about the Tower of Siloam. Better read that and take that warning to yourself.”

Geordie gazed after Mr. Craig as he turned away and muttered :

“ The Toor o’ Siloam, is it ? Aye, I ken fine about the Toor o’ Siloam an’ about the Toor o’ Babel as weel ; an’ I’ve read, too, about the

blasphemious Herod, an' sic like. Mon, but he's a hot-heided laddie an' lacks discreemeenation."

"What about Herod, Geordie?" I asked.

"Aboot Herod?" with a strong tinge of contempt in his tone. "Aboot Herod? Mon, hae ye no' read in the Screepturs aboot Herod an' the wur-r-ms in the wame o' him?"

"Oh, yes, I see," I hastened to answer.

"Aye, a fule can see what's flapped in his face," with which bit of proverbial philosophy he suddenly left me.

But Geordie thenceforth contented himself, in Mr. Craig's presence at least, with ominous headshakings, equally aggravating and impossible to answer.

That same night, however, Geordie showed that with all his theories he had a man's true heart, for he came in haste to Mrs. Mavor to say:

"Ye'll be needed ower yonder, I'm thinkin'."

"Why? Is the baby worse? Have you been in?"

"Na, na," replied Geordie cautiously, "I'll no gang where I'm no wanted. But yon puir thing ye can hear outside weepin' an' moanin'. She's maybe need ye tae," he went on dubiously to me. "Ye're a kind o' doctor, I hear," not committing

himself to any opinion as to my professional value. But Slavin would have none of me, having got the doctor sober enough to prescribe.

The interest of the camp in Slavin was greatly increased by the illness of his baby, which was to him as the apple of his eye. There were a few who, impressed by Geordie's profound convictions upon the matter, were inclined to favor the retribution theory and connect the baby's illness with the vengeance of the Almighty. Among these few was Slavin himself, and goaded by his remorseful terrors he sought relief in drink. But this brought him only deeper and fiercer gloom, so that between her suffering child and her savagely despairing husband, the poor mother was desperate with terror and grief.

"Ah! madame," she sobbed to Mrs. Mavor, "my heart is broke for him. He's beet notting for tree days, but jis dreenk, dreenk, dreenk."

The next day a man came for me in haste. The baby was dying and the doctor was drunk. I found the little one in a convulsion lying across Mrs. Mavor's knees, the mother kneeling beside it, wringing her hands in a dumb agony, and Slavin standing near, silent and suffering. I glanced at the bottle of medicine upon the table and asked Mrs. Mavor the dose, and found the baby had been poisoned. My look of horror told \

Slavin something was wrong, and striding to me he caught my arm and asked :

“What is it? Is the medicine wrong?”

I tried to put him off, but his grip tightened till his fingers seemed to reach the bone.

“The dose is certainly too large; but let me go—I must do something.”

He let me go at once, saying in a voice that made my heart sore for him: “He has killed my baby; he has killed my baby.” And then he cursed the doctor with awful curses, and with a look of such murderous fury on his face that I was glad the doctor was too drunk to appear.

His wife, hearing his curses and understanding the cause, broke out into wailing hard to bear.

“Ah! *mon petit ange!* It is dat wheesky dat’s keel my baby. Ah! *mon chéri, mon amour.* Ah! *mon Dieu!* Ah, Michael, how often I say dat wheesky he’s not good ting.”

It was more than Slavin could bear, and with awful curses he passed out. Mrs. Mavor laid the baby in its crib, for the convulsion had passed away; and putting her arms about the wailing little Frenchwoman, comforted and soothed her as a mother might her child.

“And you must help your husband,” I heard her say. “He will need you more than ever. Think of him.”



“Ah! *oui!* I weel,” was the quick reply, and from that moment there was no more wailing.

It seemed no more than a minute till Slavin came in again, sober, quiet, and steady; the passion was all gone from his face, and only the grief remained.

As we stood leaning over the sleeping child the little thing opened its eyes, saw its father, and smiled. It was too much for him. The big man dropped on his knees with a dry sob.

“Is there no chance at all, at all?” he whispered, but I could give him no hope.

He immediately rose, and pulling himself together stood perfectly quiet.

A new terror seized upon the mother.

“My baby is not—what you call it?” going through the form of baptism. “An’ he will not come to *la sainte Vierge*,” she said, crossing herself.

“Do not fear for your little one,” said Mrs. Mavor, still with her arms about her. “The good Saviour will take your darling into His own arms.”

But the mother would not be comforted by this. And Slavin, too, was uneasy.

“Where is Father Goulet?” he asked.

“Ah! you were not good to the holy *père de las’ tam, Michael*,” she replied sadly. “The saints are not please for you.”

"Where is the priest?" he demanded.

"I know not for sure. At de Landin', dat's lak."

"I'll go for him," he said.

But his wife clung to him, beseeching him not to leave her, and indeed he was loath to leave his little one.

I found Craig and told him the difficulty. With his usual promptness he was ready with a solution.

"Nixon has a team. He will go." Then he added: "I wonder if they would not like me to baptize their little one? Father Goulet and I have exchanged offices before now. I remember how he came to one of my people in my absence, when she was dying, read with her, prayed with her, comforted her, and helped her across the river. He is a good soul and has no nonsense about him. Send for me if you think there is need. It will make no difference to the baby, but it will comfort the mother."

Nixon was willing enough to go, but when he came to the door Mrs. Mavor saw the hard look in his face. He had not forgotten his wrong, for day by day he was still fighting the devil within that Slavin had called to life. But Mrs. Mavor, under cover of getting him instructions, drew him into the room. While listening to her his eyes

wandered from one to the other of the group till they rested upon the little white face in the crib. She noticed the change in his face.

"They fear the little one will never see the Saviour if it is not baptized," she said in a low tone.

He was eager to go.

"I'll do my best to get the priest," he said, and was gone on his sixty miles' race with death.

The long afternoon wore on, but before it was half gone I saw Nixon could not win and that the priest would be too late, so I sent for Mr. Craig. From the moment he entered the room he took command of us all. He was so simple, so manly, so tender, the hearts of the parents instinctively turned to him.

As he was about to proceed with the baptism the mother whispered to Mrs. Mavor, who hesitatingly asked Mr. Craig if he would object to using holy water.

"To me it is the same as any other," he replied gravely.

"An' will he make the good sign?" asked the mother timidly.

And so the child was baptized by the Presbyterian minister with holy water and with the sign of the cross. I don't suppose it was orthodox, and it rendered chaotic some of my religious

notions, but I thought more of Craig that moment than ever before. He was more man than minister, or perhaps he was so good a minister that day because so much a man. As he read about the Saviour and the children and the disciples who tried to get in between them, and as he told us the story in his own simple and beautiful way, and then went on to picture the home of the little children and the same Saviour in the midst of them, I felt my heart grow warm, and I could easily understand the cry of the mother :

“ Oh, *mon Jésus, prenez moi aussi*—take me wiz *mon mignon*.”

The cry wakened Slavin's heart and he said huskily :

“ Oh ! Annette ! Annette ! ”

“ Ah, *oui* ! an' Michael too ! ”

Then to Mr. Craig :

“ You tink He's tak me some day ? Eh ? ”

“ All who love Him,” he replied.

“ An' Michael too ? ” she asked, her eyes searching his face. “ An' Michael too ? ”

But Craig only replied :

“ All who love Him.”

“ Ah, Michael, you must pray *le bon Jésus*. He's *garde notre mignon*.”

And then she bent over the babe, whispering :

“ Ah, *mon chéri, mon amour*, adieu ! adieu

*mon ange!*” till Slavin put his arms about her and took her away, for as she was whispering her farewells her baby, with a little answering sigh, passed into the house with many rooms.

“Whisht, Annette darlin’; don’t cry for the baby,” said her husband. “Shure it’s better off than the rest av us, it is. An’ didn’t ye hear what the minister said about the beautiful place it is? An’ shure he wouldn’t lie to us at all.”

But a mother cannot be comforted for her first-born son.

An hour later Nixon brought Father Goulet. He was a little Frenchman with gentle manners and the face of a saint. Craig welcomed him warmly and told him what he had done.

“That is good, my brother,” he said with gentle courtesy, and turning to the mother: “Your little one is safe.”

Behind Father Goulet came Nixon softly and gazed down upon the little quiet face, beautiful with the magic of death. Slavin came quietly and stood beside him. Nixon turned and offered his hand. But Slavin said, moving slowly back:

“I did ye a wrong, Nixon, an’ it’s a sorry man I am this day for it.”

“Don’t say a word, Slavin,” answered Nixon hurriedly. “I know how you feel. I’ve got .

baby, too. I want to see it again. That's why the break hurt me so."

"As God's above," replied Slavin earnestly, "I'll hinder ye no more."

They shook hands and we passed out.

We laid the baby under the pines, not far from Billy Breen, and the sweet spring wind blew through the gap and came softly down the valley, whispering to the pines and the grass and the hiding flowers of the new life coming to the world. And the mother must have heard the whisper in her heart, for as the priest was saying the words of the service, she stood with Mrs. Mavor's arms about her, and her eyes were looking far away beyond the purple mountain tops, seeing what made her smile. And Slavin, too, looked different. His very features seemed finer. The coarseness was gone out of his face. What had come to him I could not tell.

But when the doctor came into Slavin's house that night it was the old Slavin I saw, but with a look of such deadly fury on his face that I tried to get the doctor out at once. But he was half drunk and after his manner was hideously humorous.

"How do, ladies! How do, gentlemen!" was his loud-voiced salutation. "Quite a professional gathering, clergy predominating. Lion and

lamb, too. Ha! ha! Which is the lamb, eh? Ha! ha! ha! Very good! Awfully sorry to hear of your loss, Mrs. Slavin. Did our best, you know. Can't help this sort of thing."

Before any one could move Craig was at his side, and saying in a clear, firm voice, "One moment, doctor," caught him by the arm and had him out of the room before he knew it. Slavin, who had been crouching in his chair with hands twitching and eyes glaring, rose and followed, still crouching as he walked. I hurried after him, calling him back. Turning at my voice, the doctor saw Slavin approaching. There was something so terrifying in his swift, noiseless, crouching motion that the doctor, crying out in fear, "Keep him off!" fairly turned and fled. He was too late. Like a tiger Slavin leaped upon him, and without waiting to strike had him by the throat with both hands, and bearing him to the ground, worried him there as a dog might a cat.

Immediately Craig and I were upon him, but though we lifted him clear off the ground we could not loosen that two-handed strangling grip. As we were struggling there a light hand touched my shoulder. It was Father Goulet.

"Please let him go and stand away from us," he said, waving us back.

We obeyed. He leaned over Slavin and spoke a few words to him. Slavin started as if struck a heavy blow, looked up at the priest with fear in his face, but still keeping his grip.

“Let him go,” said the priest. Slavin hesitated. “Let him go! quick!” said the priest again, and Slavin with a snarl let go his hold and stood sullenly facing the priest.

Father Goulet regarded him steadily for some seconds and then asked :

“What would you do?” His voice was gentle enough, even sweet, but there was something in it that chilled my marrow. “What would you do?” he repeated.

“He murdered my child,” growled Slavin.

“Ah! How?”

“He was drunk and poisoned him.”

“Ah! Who gave him drink? Who made him a drunkard two years ago? Who has wrecked his life?”

There was no answer, and the even-toned voice went relentlessly on :

“Who is the murderer of your child now?”

Slavin groaned and shuddered.

“Go!” and the voice grew stern. “Repent of your sin and add not another.”

Slavin turned his eyes upon the motionless figure on the ground and then upon the priest.



Father Goulet took one step toward him and, stretching out his hand and pointing with his finger, said :

“Go!”

And Slavin slowly backed away and went into his house. It was an extraordinary scene, and it is often with me now ; the dark figure on the ground, the slight, erect form of the priest with outstretched arm and finger, and Slavin backing away, fear and fury struggling in his face.

It was a near thing for the doctor, however, and two minutes more of that grip would have done for him. As it was, we had the greatest difficulty in reviving him.

What the priest did with Slavin after getting him inside I know not ; that has always been a mystery to me. But when we were passing the saloon that night after taking Mrs. Mavor home we saw a light and heard strange sounds within. Entering, we found another whisky raid in progress, Slavin himself being the raider. We stood some moments watching him knocking in the heads of casks and emptying bottles. I thought he had gone mad and approached him cautiously.

“Hello, Slavin!” I called out. “What does this mean?”

He paused in his strange work, and I saw that his face, though resolute, was quiet enough.

"It means I'm done wid the business, I am," he said in a determined voice. "I'll help no more to kill anny man or," in a lower tone, "anny man's baby."

The priest's words had struck home.

"Thank God, Slavin!" said Craig, offering his hand. "You are much too good a man for the business."

"Good or bad, I'm done wid it," he replied, going on with his work.

"You are throwing away good money, Slavin," I said as the head of a cask crashed in.

"It's meself that knows it, for the price of whisky has riz in town this week," he answered, giving me a look out of the corner of his eye. "Bedad! it was a rare clever job," referring to our Black Rock Hotel affair.

"But won't you be sorry for this?" asked Craig.

"Beloike I will; an' that's why I'm doin' it before I'm sorry for it," he replied, with a delightful bull.

"Look here, Slavin," said Craig earnestly, "if I can be of use to you in any way, count on me."

"It's good to mè the both of yez have been, an' I'll not forget it to yez," he replied with like earnestness.

As we told Mrs. Mavor that night—for Craig

thought it too good to keep—her eyes seemed to grow deeper and the light in them to glow more intense as she listened to Craig pouring out his tale. Then she gave him her hand and said:

“You have your man at last.”

“What man?”

“The man you have been waiting for.”

“Slavin?”

“Why not?”

“I never thought of it.”

“No more did he, nor any of us.” Then, after a pause, she added gently: “He has been sent to us.”

“Do you know, I believe you are right?” Craig said slowly, and then added: “But you always are.”

“I fear not,” she answered; but I thought she liked to hear his words.

The whole town was astounded next morning when Slavin went to work in the mines, and its astonishment only deepened as the days went on and he stuck to his work. Before three weeks had gone the league had bought and remodeled the saloon and had secured Slavin as resident manager.

The evening of the reopening of Slavin's saloon, as it was still called, was long remembered in Black Rock. It was the occasion of the first

appearance of the League Minstrel and Dramatic Troupe in what was described as a "hair-lifting tragedy with appropriate musical selections."

Then there was a grand supper and speeches and great enthusiasm, which reached its climax when Nixon rose to propose the toast of the evening—"Our saloon." His speech was simply a quiet, manly account of his long struggle with the deadly enemy. When he came to speak of his recent defeat he said:

"And while I am blaming no one but myself, I am glad to-night that this saloon is on our side, for my own sake and for the sake of those who have been waiting long to see me. But before I sit down I want to say that while I live I shall not forget that I owe my life to the man that took me that night to his own shack and put me in his own bed, and met me the next morning with an open hand; for I tell you I had sworn to God that that morning would be my last."

Geordie's speech was characteristic. After a brief reference to the "mysterious ways o' Providence," which he acknowledged he might sometimes fail to understand, he went on to express his unqualified approval of the new saloon.

"It's a cozy place, an' there's nae sulphur about. Besides a' that," he went on enthusiastically, "it'll be a terrible savin'. I've juist been coontin'."

“ You bet ! ” ejaculated a voice with great emphasis.

“ I’ve juist been coontin’,” went on Geordie, ignoring the remark and the laugh which followed, “ an’ it’s an awfu’-like money ye pit ower wi’ the whusky. Ye can see, ye canna dae wi’ ane bit glass ; ye maun hae twa or three at the verra least, for it’s no’ verra forrit ye get wi’ ane glass. But wi’ yon coffee ye juist get a saxpence worth an’ ye want nae mair.”

There was another shout of laughter, which puzzled Geordie much.

“ I dinna see the jowk, but I’ve slippit ower in whusky mair nor a hunner dollars.”

Then he paused, looking hard before him and twisting his face into extraordinary shapes till the men looked at him in wonder.

“ I’m rale glad o’ this saloon, but it’s ower late for the lad that canna be helpit the noo. He’ll not be needin’ help o’ oors, I doot, but there are ithers ”—and he stopped abruptly and sat down, with no applause following.

But when Slavin, our saloon-keeper, rose to reply, the men jumped up on the seats and yelled till they could yell no more. Slavin stood, evidently in trouble with himself, and finally broke out :

“ It’s spacheless I am entirely. What’s come

to me I know not, nor how it's come. But I'll do my best for yez."

And then the yelling broke out again.

I did not yell myself. I was too busy watching the varying lights in Mrs. Mavor's eyes as she looked from Craig to the yelling men on the benches and tables and then to Slavin, and I found myself wondering if she knew what it was that came to Slavin.

## CHAPTER XI.

## THE TWO CALLS.

WITH the call to Mr. Craig I fancy I had something to do myself. The call came from a young congregation in an Eastern city, and was based partly upon his college record and more upon the advice of those among the authorities who knew his work in the mountains. But I flatter myself, that my letters to friends who were of importance in that congregation were not without influence, for I was of the mind that the man who could handle Black Rock miners as he could was ready for something larger than a mountain mission. That he would refuse I had not imagined, though I ought to have known him better. He was but little troubled over it. He went with the call and the letters urging his acceptance to Mrs. Mavor. I was putting the last touches to some of my work in the room at the back of Mrs. Mavor's house when he came in. She read the letters and the call quietly and waited for him to speak.

“Well?” he said. “Should I go?”

She started and grew a little pale. His question suggested a possibility that had not occurred to her. That he could leave his work in Black Rock she had hitherto never imagined; but there was other work, and he was fit for good work anywhere. Why should he not go? I saw the fear in her face, but I saw more than fear in her eyes as for a moment or two she let them rest upon Craig's face. I read her story, and I was not sorry for either of them. But she was too much of a woman to show her heart easily to the man she loved, and her voice was even and calm as she answered his question.

“Is this a very large congregation?”

“One of the finest in all the East,” I put in for him. “It will be a great thing for Craig.”

Craig was studying her curiously. I think she noticed his eyes upon her, for she went on even more quietly:

“It will be a great chance for work, and you are able for a larger sphere, you know, than poor Black Rock affords.”

“Who will take Black Rock?” he asked.

“Let some other fellow have a try at it,” I said. “Why should you waste your talents here?”

“Waste?” cried Mrs. Mavor indignantly.

“Well, ‘bury,’ if you like it better,” I replied



“It would not take much of a grave for that funeral,” said Craig, smiling.

“Oh,” said Mrs. Mavor, “you will be a great man, I know, and perhaps you ought to go now.”

But he answered coolly :

“There are fifty men wanting that Eastern charge and there is only one wanting Black Rock, and I don’t think Black Rock is anxious for a change, so I have determined to stay where I am yet awhile.”

Even my deep disgust and disappointment did not prevent me from seeing the sudden leap of joy in Mrs. Mavor’s eyes, but she, with a great effort, answered quietly :

“Black Rock will be very glad, and some of us very, very glad.”

Nothing could change his mind. There was no one he knew who could take his place just now, and why should he quit his work ? It annoyed me considerably to feel he was right. Why is it that the right things are so frequently unpleasant ?

And if I had had any doubt about the matter, next Sabbath evening would have removed it. For the men came about him after the service and let him feel in their way how much they approved his decision, though the self-sacrifice involved did not appeal to them. They were too truly Western to imagine that any inducements the

East could offer could compensate for his loss of the West. It was only fitting that the West should have the best, and so the miners took almost as a matter of course, and certainly as their right, that the best man they knew should stay with them. But there were those who knew how much of what most men consider worth while he had given up, and they loved him no less for it.

Mrs. Mavor's call was not so easily disposed of. It came close upon the other, and stirred Black Rock as nothing else had ever stirred it before.

I found her one afternoon gazing vacantly at some legal documents spread out before her on the table, and evidently overcome by their contents. There was first a lawyer's letter informing her that by the death of her husband's father she had come into the whole of the Mavor estates and all the wealth pertaining thereto. The letter asked for instructions, and urged an immediate return with a view to a personal superintendence of the estates. A letter, too, from a distant cousin of her husband urged her immediate return for many reasons, but chiefly on account of the old mother who had been left alone, with none nearer of kin than himself to care for her and cheer her old age.

With these two came another letter from her mother-in-law herself. The crabbed, trembling characters were even more eloquent than the words with which the letter closed.

"I have lost my boy, and now my husband is gone, and I am a lonely woman. I have many servants and some friends, but none nearer to me, none so near and dear as my dead son's wife. My days are not to be many. Come to me, my daughter. I want you and Lewis' child."

"Must I go?" she asked with white lips.

"Do you know her well?" I asked.

"I only saw her once or twice," she answered, "but she has been very good to me."

"She can hardly need you. She has friends. And surely you are needed here."

She looked at me eagerly.

"Do you think so?" she said.

"Ask any man in the camp—Shaw, Nixon, young Winton, Geordie. Ask Craig," I replied.

"Yes, he will tell me," she said.

Even as she spoke Craig came up the steps. I passed into my studio and went on with my work, for my days at Black Rock were getting few and many sketches remained to be filled in.

Through my open door I saw Mrs. Mavor lay her letters before Mr. Craig, saying, "I have a call, too." They thought not of me.

He went through the papers, carefully laid them down without a word while she waited anxiously, almost impatiently, for him to speak.

"Well?" she asked, using his own words to her. "Should I go?"

"I do not know," he replied. "That is for you to decide—you know all the circumstances."

"The letters tell all."

Her tone carried a feeling of disappointment. He did not appear to care.

"The estates are large?" he asked.

"Yes, large enough—twelve thousand a year."

"And has your mother-in-law any one with her?"

"She has friends, but, as she says, none near of kin. Her nephew looks after the works—iron works, you know. He has shares in them."

"She is evidently very lonely," he answered gravely.

"What shall I do?" she asked, and I knew she was waiting to hear him urge her to stay; but he did not see, or at least gave no heed.

"I cannot say," he repeated quietly. "There are many things to consider. The estates——"

"The estates seem to trouble you," she replied almost fretfully.

He looked up in surprise. I wondered at his slowness.

"Yes, the estates," he went on, "and tenants, I suppose—your mother-in-law ; your little Marjorie's future, your own future."

"The estates are in capable hands, I should suppose," she urged, "and my future depends upon what I choose my work to be."

"But one cannot shift one's responsibilities," he replied gravely. "These estates, these tenants, have come to you, and with them come duties."

"I do not want them," she cried.

"That life has great possibilities of good," he said kindly.

"I had thought that perhaps there was work for me here," she suggested timidly.

"Great work," he hastened to say. "You have done great work. But you will do that wherever you go. The only question is where your work lies."

"You think I should go," she said suddenly and a little bitterly.

"I cannot bid you stay," he answered steadily.

"How can I go?" she cried, appealing to him.

"Must I go?"

How he could resist that appeal I could not understand. His face was cold and hard, and his voice was almost harsh as he replied :

"If it is right, you will go—you must go."

Then she burst forth :

"I cannot go. I shall stay here. My work is here: my heart is here. How can I go? You thought it worth your while to stay here and work. Why should not I?"

The momentary gleam in his eyes died out, and again he said coldly:

"This work was clearly mine. I am needed here."

"Yes! yes!" she cried, her voice full of pain. "You are needed, but there is no need of me."

"Stop! stop!" he said sharply. "You must not say so."

"I will say it! I must say it!" she cried, her voice vibrating with the intensity of her feelings. "I know you do not need me. You have your work, your miners, your plans; you need no one; you are strong. But," and her voice rose to a cry, "I am not strong by myself; you have made me strong. I came here a foolish girl, foolish and selfish and narrow. God sent me grief. Three years ago my heart died. Now I am living again. I am a woman now, no longer a girl. You have done this for me. Your life, your words, yourself—you have shown me a better, a higher life than I had ever known before, and now you send me away."

She paused abruptly.

"Blind, stupid fool!" I said to myself.

He held himself resolutely in hand, answering carefully, but his voice had lost its coldness and was sweet and kind.

“Have I done this for you? Then surely God has been good to me. And you have helped me more than any words could tell you.”

“Helped!” she repeated scornfully.

“Yes, helped,” he answered, wondering at her scorn.

“You can do without my help,” she went on. “You make people help you. You will get many to help you; but I need help, too.”

She was standing before him with her hands tightly clasped; her face was pale and her eyes deeper than ever. He sat looking up at her in a kind of maze as she poured out her words hot and fast.

“I am not thinking of you.” His coldness had hurt her deeply. “I am selfish; I am thinking of myself. How shall I do? I have grown to depend on you, to look to you. It is nothing to you that I go, but to me——”

She did not dare to finish.

By this time Craig was standing before her, his face deadly pale. When she came to the end of her words he said in a voice low, sweet, and thrilling with emotion:

“Ah, if you only knew! Do not make me

forget myself. You do not guess what you are doing.”

“What am I doing? What is there to know but that you tell me easily to go?”

She was struggling with the tears she was too proud to let him see.

He put his hands resolutely behind him, looking at her as if studying her face for the first time. Under his searching look she dropped her eyes and the warm color came slowly up into her neck and face; then, as if with a sudden resolve, she lifted her eyes to his and looked back at him unflinchingly.

He started, surprised, drew slowly near, and put his hands upon her shoulders, surprise giving place to wild joy. She never moved her eyes; they drew him toward her. He took her face between his hands, smiled into her eyes, kissed her lips. She did not move; he stood back from her, threw up his head, and laughed aloud. She came to him, put her head upon his breast, and, lifting up her face said: “Kiss me.” He put his arms about her, bent down and kissed her lips again, and then reverently her brow. Then putting her back from him, but still holding both her hands, he cried:

“No! you shall not go. I shall never let you go.”





“No! you shall not go. I shall never let you go.” Page 204.

—*Black Rock.*



She gave a little sigh of content, and, smiling up at him, said :

“ I can go now,” but even as she spoke the flush died from her face and she shuddered.

“ Never ! ” he almost shouted ; “ nothing shall take you away. We shall work here together.”

“ Ah, if we could, if we only could,” she said piteously.

“ Why not ? ” he demanded fiercely.

“ You will send me away. You will say it is right for me to go,” she replied sadly.

“ Do we not love each other ? ” was his impatient answer.

“ Ah ! yes, love,” she said, “ but love is not all.”

“ No ! ” cried Craig ; “ but love is the best.”

“ Yes ! ” she said sadly ; “ love is the best, and it is for love’s sake we will do the best.”

“ There is no better work than here. Surely this is best,” and he pictured his plans before her. She listened eagerly.

“ Oh ! if it should be right,” she cried, “ I will do what you say. You are good, you are wise. You shall tell me.”

She could not have recalled him better. He stood silent some moments, then burst out passionately :

“ Why, then, has love come to us ? We did

not seek it. Surely love is of God. Does God mock us ?”

He threw himself into his chair, pouring out his words of passionate protestation. She listened, smiling, then came to him, and, touching his hair as a mother might her child's, said :

“ Oh, I am very happy ! I was afraid you would not care, and I could not bear to go that way.”

“ You shall not go,” he cried aloud, as if in pain. “ Nothing can make that right.”

But she only said :

“ You shall tell me to-morrow. You cannot see to-night, but you will see, and you will tell me.”

He stood up and, holding both her hands, looked long into her eyes, then turned abruptly away and went out.

She stood where he left her for some moments, her face radiant and her hands pressed upon her heart. Then she came toward my room. She found me busy with my painting, but as I looked up and met her eyes she flushed slightly and said :

“ I quite forgot you.”

“ So it appeared to me.”

“ You heard ?”

“ And saw,” I replied boldly. “ It would have been rude to interrupt, you see.”

“Oh, I am so glad and thankful.”

“Yes. It was rather considerate of me.”

“Oh, I don't mean that,” the flush deepening.

“I am glad you know.”

“I have known some time.”

“How could you? I only knew to-day myself.”

“I have eyes.”

She flushed again.

“Do you mean that people——” she began anxiously.

“No. I am not ‘people.’ I have eyes, and my eyes have been opened.”

“Opened?”

“Yes, by love.”

Then I told her openly how, weeks ago, I struggled with my heart and mastered it, for I saw it was vain to love her, because she loved a better man who loved her in return. She looked at me shyly and said:

“I am sorry.”

“Don't worry,” I said cheerfully. “I didn't break my heart, you know. I stopped it in time.”

“Oh!” she said, slightly disappointed; then her lips began to twitch, and she went off into a fit of hysterical laughter.

“Forgive me,” she said humbly; “but you speak as if it had been a fever.”

"Fever is nothing to it," I said solemnly. "It was a near thing."

At which she went off again. I was glad to see her laugh. It gave me time to recover my equilibrium and it relieved her intense emotional strain. So I rattled on some nonsense about Craig and myself till I saw she was giving no heed, but thinking her own thoughts; and what these were it was not hard to guess.

Suddenly she broke in upon my talk:

"He will tell me that I must go from him."

"I hope he is no such fool," I said emphatically and somewhat rudely, I fear; for I confess I was impatient with the very possibility of separation for these two, to whom love meant so much. Some people take this sort of thing easily and some not so easily; but love for a woman like this comes once only to a man, and then he carries it with him through the length of his life and warms his heart with it in death. And when a man smiles or sneers at such love as this, I pity him and say no word, for my speech would be in an unknown tongue. So my heart was sore as I sat looking up at this woman who stood before me, overflowing with the joy of her new love and dully conscious of the coming pain. But I soon found it was vain to urge my opinion that she

should remain and share the work and life of the man she loved. She only answered :

“ You will help him all you can, for it will hurt him to have me go.”

The quiver in her voice took out all the anger from my heart, and before I knew I had pledged myself to do all I could to help him.

But when I came upon him that night, sitting in the light of his fire, I saw he must be let alone. Some battles we fight side by side, with comrades cheering us and being cheered to victory ; but there are fights we may not share, and these are deadly fights where lives are lost and won. So I could only lay my hand upon his shoulder without a word. He looked up quickly, read my face, and said with a groan :

“ You know ? ”

“ I could not help it. But why groan ? ”

“ She will think it right to go,” he said despairingly.

“ Then you must think for her. You must bring some common sense to bear upon the question.”

“ I cannot see clearly yet,” he said. “ The light will come.”

“ May I show you how to see it ? ” I asked.

“ Go on,” he said.

For an hour I talked, eloquently, even vehe-

mently urging the reason and right of my opinion. She would be doing no more than every woman does, no more than she did before ; her mother-in-law had a comfortable home, all that wealth could procure, good servants, and friends ; the estates could be managed without her personal supervision ; after a few years' work here they would go East for little Marjorie's education ; why should two lives be broken ?—and so I went on.

He listened carefully, even eagerly.

“ You make a good case,” he said with a slight smile. “ I will take time. Perhaps you are right. The light will come. Surely it will come. But,” and here he sprang up and stretched his arms to full length above his head, “ I am not sorry ; whatever comes I am not sorry. It is great to have her love, but greater to love her as I do. Thank God ! nothing can take that away. I am willing, glad to suffer for the joy of loving her.”

Next morning, before I was awake, he was gone, leaving a note for me :

“ MY DEAR CONNOR :

“ I am due at the Landing. When I see you again I think my way will be clear. Now all is dark. At times I am a coward, and often, as you sometimes kindly inform me, an ass ; but I hope I may never become a mule.

“ I am willing to be led, or want to be at any



rate. I must do the best—not second best—for her, for me. The best only is God's will. What else would you have? Be good to her these days, dear old fellow. Yours,

“CRAIG.”

How often those words have braced me he will never know, but I am a better man for them: “The best only is God's will. What else would you have?” I resolved I would rage and fret no more, and that I would worry Mrs. Mavor with no more argument or expostulation, but, as my friend had asked, “be good to her.”

## CHAPTER XII.

## LOVE IS NOT ALL.

THOSE days when we were waiting Craig's return we spent in the woods or on the mountainsides or down in the canyon beside the stream that danced down to meet the Black Rock River, I talking and sketching and reading, and she listening and dreaming, with often a happy smile upon her face. But there were moments when a cloud of shuddering fear would sweep the smile away, and then I would talk of Craig till the smile came back again.

But the woods and the mountains and the river were her best, her wisest friends during those days. How sweet the ministry of the woods to her! The trees were in their summer leaves, fresh and full of life. They swayed and rustled above us, flinging their interlacing shadows upon us, and their swaying and their rustling soothed and comforted like the voice and touch of a mother. And the mountains, too, in all the glory of their varying robes of blues

and purples, stood calmly, solemnly about us, uplifting our souls into regions of rest. The changing lights and shadows flitted swiftly over their rugged fronts, but left them ever as before in their steadfast majesty. "God's in His heaven." What would you have? And ever the little river sang its cheerful courage, fearing not the great mountains that threatened to bar its passage to the sea. Mrs. Mavor heard the song and her courage rose.

"We too shall find our way," she said, and I believed her.

But through these days I could not make her out, and I found myself studying her as I might a new acquaintance. Years had fallen from her; she was a girl again, full of young, warm life. She was as sweet as before, but there was a soft shyness over her, a half-shamed, half-frank consciousness in her face, a glad light in her eyes that made her all new to me. Her perfect trust in Craig was touching to see.

"He will tell me what to do," she would say, till I began to realize how impossible it would be for him to betray such trust and be anything but true to the best.

So much did I dread Craig's home-coming that I sent for Graeme and old man Nelson, who was more and more Graeme's trusted counselor and

friend. They were both highly excited by the story I had to tell, for I thought it best to tell them all; but I was not a little surprised and disgusted that they did not see the matter in my light. In vain I protested against the madness of allowing anything to send these two from each other. Graeme summed up the discussion in his own emphatic way, but with an earnestness in his words not unusual with him.

“Craig will know better than any of us what is right to do, and he will do that, and no man can turn him from it; and,” he added, “I should be sorry to try.”

Then my wrath rose and I cried:

“It’s a tremendous shame! They love each other. You are talking sentimental humbug and nonsense!”

“He must do the right,” said Nelson in his deep, quiet voice.

“Right! Nonsense! By what right does he send from him the woman he loves?”

“‘He pleased not Himself,’” quoted Nelson reverently.

“Nelson is right,” said Graeme. “I should not like to see him weakened.”

“Look here,” I stormed; “I didn’t bring you men to back him up in his nonsense. I thought you could keep your heads level.”

“Now, Connor,” said Graeme, “don’t rage—leave that for the heathen; it’s bad form, and useless besides. Craig will walk his way where his light falls; and by all that’s holy, I should hate to see him fail; for if he weakens like the rest of us my North Star will have dropped from my sky.”

“Nice selfish spirit,” I muttered.

“Entirely so. I’m not a saint, but I feel like steering by one when I see him.”

When, after a week had gone, Craig rode up one early morning to his shack door, his face told me that he had fought his fight and had not been beaten. He had ridden all night and was ready to drop with weariness.

“Connor, old boy,” he said, putting out his hand, “I’m rather played. There was a bad row at the Landing. I have just closed poor Colley’s eyes. It was awful. I must get sleep. Look after Dandy, will you, like a good chap?”

“Oh, Dandy be hanged!” I said, for I knew it was not the fight, nor the watching, nor the long ride that had shaken his iron nerve and given him that face. “Go in and lie down. I’ll bring you something.”

“Wake me in the afternoon,” he said. “She is waiting. Perhaps you will go to her”—his lips quivered—“my nerve is rather gone.” Then

with a very wan smile he added: "I am giving you a lot of trouble."

"You go to thunder!" I burst out, for my throat was hot and sore with grief for him.

"I think I'd rather go to sleep," he replied, still smiling.

I could not speak, and was glad of the chance of being alone with Dandy.

When I came in I found him sitting with his head in his arms upon the table fast asleep. I made him tea, forced him to take a warm bath, and sent him to bed, while I went to Mrs. Mavor. I went with a fearful heart, but that was because I had forgotten the kind of woman she was.

She was standing in the light of the window waiting for me. Her face was pale but steady, there was a proud light in her fathomless eyes, a slight smile parted her lips, and she carried her head like a queen.

"Come in," she said. "You need not fear to tell me. I saw him ride home. He has not failed, thank God! I am proud of him. I knew he would be true. He loves me"—she drew in her breath sharply and a faint color tinged her cheeks—"but he knows love is not all—ah, love is not all! Oh! I am glad and proud!"

"Glad!" I gasped, amazed.

"You would not have him prove faithless!" she said with proud defiance.

"Oh, it is high sentimental nonsense," I could not help saying.

"You should not say so," she replied, and her voice rang clear. "Honor, faith, and duty are sentiments, but they are not nonsense."

In spite of my rage I was lost in amazed admiration of the high spirit of the woman who stood up so straight before me. But as I told how worn and broken he was she listened with changing color and swelling bosom, her proud courage all gone, and only love, anxious and pitying, in her eyes.

"Shall I go to him?" she asked with timid eagerness and deepening color.

"He is sleeping. He said he would come to you," I replied.

"I shall wait for him," she said softly, and the tenderness in her tone went straight to my heart, and it seemed to me a man might suffer much to be loved with love such as this.

In the early afternoon Graeme came to her. She met him with both hands outstretched, saying in a low voice:

"I am very happy."

"Are you sure?" he asked anxiously.

“Oh, yes,” she said, but her voice was like a sob; “quite, quite sure.”

They talked long together till I saw that Craig must soon be coming, and I called Graeme away. He held her hands, looking steadily into her eyes, and said:

“You are better even than I thought. I’m going to be a better man.”

Her eyes filled with tears, but her smile did not fade as she answered:

“Yes! you will be a good man, and God will give you work to do.”

He bent his head over her hands and stepped back from her as from a queen, but he spoke no words till we came to Craig’s door. Then he said with humility that seemed strange in him:

“Connor, that is great, to conquer one’s self. It is worth while. I am going to try.”

I would not have missed his meeting with Craig. Nelson was busy with tea. Craig was writing near the window. He looked up as Graeme came in and nodded an easy good-evening; but Graeme strode to him and, putting one hand on his shoulder, held out his hand for Craig to take.

After a moment’s surprise Craig rose to his feet, and, facing him squarely, took the offered hand in both of his and held it fast without a word.



Graeme was the first to speak, and his voice was deep with emotion :

“ You are a great man, a good man. I'd give something to have your grit.”

Poor Craig stood looking at him, not daring to speak for some moments ; then he said quietly :

“ Not good nor great, but, thank God, not quite a traitor.”

“ Good man ! ” went on Graeme, patting him on the shoulder. “ Good man ! But it's tough.”

Craig sat down quickly, saying :

“ Don't do that, old chap ! ”

I went up with Craig to Mrs. Mavor's door. She did not hear us coming, but stood near the window gazing up at the mountains. She was dressed in some rich soft stuff and wore at her breast a bunch of wild flowers. I had never seen her so beautiful. I did not wonder that Craig paused with his foot upon the threshold to look at her. She turned and saw us. With a glad cry, “ Oh ! my darling ! you have come to me,” she came with outstretched arms. I turned and fled, but the cry and the vision were long with me.

It was decided that night that Mrs. Mavor should go the next week. A miner and his wife were going East, and I too would join the party.

The camp went into mourning at the news, but

it was understood that any display of grief before Mrs. Mavor was bad form. She was not to be annoyed.

But when I suggested that she should leave quietly and avoid the pain of saying good-by, she flatly refused.

“I must say good-by to every man. They love me and I love them.”

It was decided, too, at first, that there should be nothing in the way of a testimonial, but when Craig found out that the men were coming to her with all sorts of extraordinary gifts, he agreed that it would be better that they should unite in one gift. So it was agreed that I should buy a ring for her. And were it not that the contributions were strictly limited to one dollar, the purse that Slavin handed her when Shaw read the address at the farewell supper would have been many times filled with the gold that was pressed upon the committee. There were no speeches at the supper, except one by myself in reply on Mrs. Mavor's behalf. She had given me the words to say, and I was thoroughly prepared, else I should not have got through. I began in the usual way: “Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen: Mrs. Mavor is——” But I got no further, for at the mention of her name the men stood on the chairs and yelled until they could yell no more. There

were over two hundred and fifty of them, and the effect was overpowering. But I got through my speech.

I remember it well. It began: "Mrs. Mavor is greatly touched by this mark of your love, and she will wear your ring always with pride." And it ended with: "She has one request to make, that you will be true to the league and that you stand close about the man who did most to make it. She wishes me to say that however far away she may have to go, she is leaving her heart in Black Rock, and she can think of no greater joy than to come back to you again."

Then they had "The Sweet By and By," but the men would not join in the refrain, unwilling to lose a note of the glorious voice they loved to hear. Before the last verse she beckoned to me. I went to her standing by Craig's side as he played for her.

"Ask them to sing," she entreated. "I cannot bear it."

"Mrs. Mavor wishes you to sing in the refrain," I said, and at once the men sat up and cleared their throats. The singing was not good, for at the first sound of the hoarse notes of the men Craig's head went down over the organ, for he was thinking, I suppose, of the days before them when they would long in vain for that thrilling

voice that soared high over their own hoarse tones. And after the voices died away he kept on playing till, half turning toward him, she sang alone once more the refrain in a voice low and sweet and tender, as if for him alone. And so he took it, for he smiled up at her his old smile full of courage and full of love.

Then for one whole hour she stood saying good-bye to those rough, gentle-hearted men whose inspiration to goodness she had been for five years. It was very wonderful and very quiet. It was understood that there was to be no nonsense, and Abe had been heard to declare that he would "throw out any cotton-backed fool who couldn't hold himself down," and further, he had enjoined them to remember that her arm "wasn't a pump-handle."

At last they were all gone, all but her guard of honor—Shaw, Vernon, Winton, Geordie, Nixon, Abe, Nelson, Craig, and myself.

This was the real farewell; for though in the early light of the next morning two hundred men stood silent about the stage, and then as it moved out waved their hats and yelled madly, this was the last touch they had of her hand. Her place was up on the driver's seat between Abe and Mr. Craig, who held little Marjorie on his knee. The rest of the guard of honor were to follow with

Graeme's team. It was Winton's fine sense that kept Graeme from following them close. "Let her go out alone," he said, and so we held back and watched her go.

She stood with her back toward Abe's plunging four-horse team, and steadying herself with one hand on Abe's shoulder, gazed down upon us. Her head was bare, her lips parted in a smile, her eyes glowing with their own deep light; and so, facing us, erect and smiling, she drove away, waving us farewell till Abe swung his team into the canyon road and we saw her no more. A sigh shuddered through the crowd, and, with a sob in his voice, Winton said: "God help us all."

I close my eyes and see it all again. The waving crowd of dark-faced men, the plunging horses, and, high up beside the driver, the swaying, smiling, waving figure, and about all the mountains, framing the picture with their dark sides and white peaks tipped with the gold of the rising sun. It is a picture I love to look upon, albeit it calls up another that I can never see but through tears.

I look across a strip of ever-widening water at a group of men upon the wharf, standing with heads uncovered, every man a hero, though not a man of them suspects it, least of all the man who stands in front, strong, resolute, self-conquered.

And, gazing long, I think I see him turn again to his place among the men of the mountains, not forgetting, but every day remembering the great love that came to him, and remembering, too, that love is not all. It is then the tears come.

But for that picture two of us at least are better men to-day.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## HOW NELSON CAME HOME.

THROUGH the long summer the mountains and the pines were with me. And through the winter too, busy as I was filling in my Black Rock sketches for the railroad people who would still persist in ordering them by the dozen, the memory of that stirring life would come over me, and once more I would be among the silent pines and the mighty snow-peaked mountains. And before me would appear the red-shirted shantymen or dark-faced miners, great, free, bold fellows, driving me almost mad with the desire to seize and fix those swiftly changing groups of picturesque figures. At such times I would drop my sketch, and with eager brush seize a group, a face, a figure, and that is how my studio comes to be filled with the men of Black Rock. There they are all about me. Graeme and the men from the woods, Sandy, Baptiste, the Campbells, and in many attitudes and groups old man Nelson; Craig, too, and his miners, Shaw, Geordie, Nixon, and poor old Billy and the keeper of the league saloon.

It seemed as if I lived among them, and the illusion was greatly helped by the vivid letters Graeme sent me from time to time. Brief notes came now and then from Craig, too, to whom I had sent a faithful account of how I had brought Mrs. Mavor to her ship, and of how I had watched her sail away with none too brave a face as she held up her hand that bore the miner's ring and smiled with that deep light in her eyes. Ah! those eyes have driven me to despair and made me fear that I am no great painter, after all, in spite of what my friends tell me who come in to smoke my good cigars and praise my brush. I can get the brow and hair and mouth and pose, but the eyes! the eyes elude me—and the faces of Mrs. Mavor on my wall, that the men praise and rave over, are not such as I could show to any of the men from the mountains.

Graeme's letters tell me chiefly about Craig and his doings and about old man Nelson; while from Craig I hear about Graeme, and how he and Nelson are standing at his back and doing what they can to fill the gap that never can be filled. The three are much together, I can see, and I am glad for them all, but chiefly for Craig, whose face, grief-stricken but resolute, and often gentle as a woman's, will not leave me nor let me rest in peace.



The note of thanks he sent me was entirely characteristic. There were no heroics, much less pining or self-pity. It was simple and manly, not ignoring the pain, but making much of the joy. And then they had their work to do. That note, so clear, so manly, so nobly sensible, stiffens my back yet at times.

In the spring came the startling news that Black Rock would soon be no more. The mines were to close down on April 1. The company, having allured the confiding public with enticing descriptions of marvelous drifts, veins, assays, and prospects, and having expended vast sums of the public's money in developing the mines till the assurance of their reliability was absolutely final, calmly shut down and vanished. With their vanishing vanishes Black Rock, not without loss and much deep cursing on the part of the men brought some hundreds of miles to aid the company in its extraordinary and wholly inexplicable game.

Personally it grieved me to think that my plan of returning to Black Rock could never be carried out. It was a great compensation, however, that the three men most representative to me of that life were soon to visit me actually in my own home and den. Graeme's letter said that in one month they might be expected to appear. At

least he and Nelson were soon to come, and Craig would soon follow.

On receiving the great news I at once looked up young Nelson and his sister, and we proceeded to celebrate the joyful prospect with a specially good dinner. I found the greatest delight in picturing the joy and pride of the old man in his children, whom he had not seen for fifteen or sixteen years. The mother had died some five years before, then the farm was sold, and the brother and sister came into the city; and any father might be proud of them. The son was a well-made young fellow, handsome enough, thoughtful, and solid-looking. The girl reminded me of her father. The same resolution was seen in mouth and jaw and the same passion slumbered in the dark gray eyes. She was not beautiful, but she carried herself well, and one would always look at her twice. It would be worth something to see the meeting between father and daughter.

But fate, the greatest artist of us all, takes little count of the careful drawing and the bright colorings of our fancy's pictures, but with rude hand deranges all, and with one swift sweep paints out the bright and paints in the dark. And this trick he served me when, one June night, after long and anxious waiting for some word from the West, my door suddenly opened

and Graeme walked in upon me like a specter, gray and voiceless. My shout of welcome was choked back by the look in his face, and I could only gaze at him and wait for his word. He gripped my hand, tried to speak, but failed to make words come.

“Sit down, old man,” I said, pushing him into my chair, “and take your time.”

He obeyed, looking up at me with burning, sleepless eyes. My heart was sore for his misery, and I said, “Don’t mind, old chap; it can’t be so awfully bad. You’re here safe and sound, at any rate,” and so I went on to give him time. But he shuddered and looked round and groaned.

“Now, look here, Graeme, let’s have it. When did you land here? Where is Nelson? Why didn’t you bring him up?”

“He is at the station in his coffin,” he answered slowly.

“In his coffin?” I echoed, my beautiful pictures all vanishing. “How was it?”

“Through my cursed folly,” he groaned bitterly.

“What happened?” I asked.

But ignoring my question he said:

“I must see his children. I have not slept for four nights. I hardly know what I am doing;

but I can't rest till I see his children. I promised him. Get them for me."

"To-morrow will do. Go to sleep now, and we shall arrange everything to-morrow," I urged.

"No!" he said fiercely; "to-night—now!"

In half an hour they were listening, pale and grief-stricken, to the story of their father's death.

Poor Graeme was relentless in his self-condemnation as he told how, through his "cursed folly," old Nelson was killed. The three—Craig, Graeme, and Nelson—had come as far as Victoria together. There they left Craig and came on to San Francisco. In an evil hour Graeme met a companion of other and evil days, and it was not long till the old fever came upon him.

In vain Nelson warned and pleaded. The reaction from the monotony and poverty of camp life to the excitement and luxury of the San Francisco gaming palaces swung Graeme quite off his feet, and all that Nelson could do was to follow from place to place and keep watch.

"And there he would sit," said Graeme in a hard bitter voice, "waiting and watching often till the gray morning light, while my madness held me fast to the table. One night"—here he paused a moment, put his face in his hands and shuddered; but quickly he was master of himself again, and went on in the same hard voice—"one

night my partner and I were playing two men who had done us up before. I knew they were cheating, but could not detect them. Game after game they won, till I was furious at my stupidity in not being able to catch them. Happening to glance at Nelson in the corner, I caught a meaning look, and looking again, he threw me a signal. I knew at once what the fraud was, and next game charged the fellow with it. He gave me the lie; I struck his mouth, but before I could draw my gun, his partner had me by the arms. What followed I hardly knew. While I was struggling to get free I saw him reach for his weapon, but as he drew it Nelson sprang across the table and bore him down. When the row was over three men lay on the floor. One was Nelson; he took the shot meant for me."

Again the story paused.

"And the man that shot him?"

I started at the intense fierceness in the voice, and, looking upon the girl, saw her eyes blazing with a terrible light.

"He is dead," answered Graeme indifferently.

"You killed him?" she asked eagerly.

Graeme looked at her curiously and answered slowly:

"I did not mean to. He came at me. I struck him harder than I knew. He never moved."

She drew a sigh of satisfaction and waited.

“ I got him to a private ward, had the best doctor in the city, and sent for Craig to Victoria. For three days we thought he would live—he was keen to get home ; but by the time Craig came we had given up hope. Oh, but I was thankful to see Craig come in, and the joy in the old man’s eyes was beautiful to see. There was no pain at last, and no fear. He would not allow me to reproach myself, saying over and over, ‘ You would have done the same for me ’—as I would, fast enough—‘ and it is better me than you. I am old and done ; you will do much good yet for the boys.’ And he kept looking at me till I could only promise to do my best.

“ But I am glad I told him how much good he had done me during the last year, for he seemed to think that too good to be true. And when Craig told him how he had helped the boys in the camp, and how Sandy and Baptiste and the Campbells would always be better men for his life among them, the old man’s face actually shone, as if light were coming through. And with surprise and joy he kept on saying, ‘ Do you think so ? Do you think so ? Perhaps so ; perhaps so.’ At the last he talked of Christmas night at the camp. You were there, you remember. Craig had been holding a service, and something

happened. I don't know what, but they both knew."

"I know," I said, and I saw again the picture of the old man under the pine, upon his knees in the snow, with his face turned up to the stars.

"Whatever it was, it was in his mind at the very last, and I can never forget his face as he turned it to Craig. One hears of such things: I had often, but had never put much faith in them; but joy, rapture, triumph, these are what were in his face as he said, his breath coming short: 'You said—He wouldn't—fail me—you were right—not once—not once—He stuck to me—I'm glad he told me—thank God—for you—you showed—me—I'll see Him—and—tell Him——' And Craig, kneeling beside him so steady—I was behaving like a fool—smiled down through his streaming tears into the dim eyes so brightly till they could see no more. Thank him for that! He helped the old man through, and he helped me too, that night, thank God!"

And Graeme's voice, hard till now, broke in a sob.

He had forgotten us and was back beside his passing friend, and all his self-control could not keep back the flowing tears.

"It was his life for mine," he said huskily.

The brother and sister were quietly weeping,

but spoke no word, though I knew Graeme was waiting for them.

I took up the word and told of what I had known of Nelson and his influence upon the men of Black Rock. They listened eagerly enough, but still without speaking. There seemed nothing to say till I suggested to Graeme that he must get some rest. Then the girl turned to him, and impulsively putting out her hand, said :

“Oh, it is all so sad ; but how can we ever thank you ?”

“Thank me !” gasped Graeme. “Can you forgive me ? I brought him to his death.”

“No ! no ! You must not say so,” she answered hurriedly. “You would have done the same for him.”

“God knows I would,” said Graeme earnestly ; “and God bless you for your words !”

And I was thankful to see the tears start in his dry, burning eyes.

We carried him to the old home in the country, that he might lie by the side of the wife he had loved and wronged. A few friends met us at the wayside station and followed in sad procession along the country road that wound past farms and through woods, and at last up to the ascent where the quaint old wooden church, black with the rains and snows of many years, stood among



its silent graves. The little graveyard sloped gently toward the setting sun, and from it one could see, far on every side, the fields of grain and meadow-land that wandered off over softly undulating hills to meet the maple woods at the horizon, dark, green, and cool. Here and there white farmhouses, with great barns standing near, looked out from clustering orchards.

Up the grass-grown walk and through the crowding mounds, over which waves, uncut, the long, tangling grass, we bear our friend, and let him gently down into the kindly bosom of mother earth, dark, moist, and warm. The sound of a distant cow-bell mingles with the voice of the last prayer; the clods drop heavily with heart-startling echo; the mound is heaped and shaped by kindly friends, sharing with one another the task; the long rough sods are laid over and patted into place; the old minister takes farewell in a few words of gentle sympathy; the brother and sister, with lingering looks at the two graves side by side, the old and the new, step into the farmer's carriage and drive away; the sexton locks the gate and goes home, and we are left outside alone.

Then we went back and stood by Nelson's grave.

After a long silence Graeme spoke.

“Connor, he did not grudge his life to me, and I think”—and here the words came slowly—“I understand now what that means, ‘Who loved me and gave Himself for me.’”

Then taking off his hat he said reverently :

“By God’s help Nelson’s life shall not end, but shall go on. Yes, old man !” looking down upon the grave, “I’m with you ;” and lifting up his face to the calm sky, “God help me to be true.”

Then he turned and walked briskly away, as one might who had pressing business or as soldiers march from a comrade’s grave to a merry tune, not that they have forgotten, but they have still to fight.

And this was the way old man Nelson came home.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## GRAEME'S NEW BIRTH.

THERE was more left in that grave than old man Nelson's dead body. It seemed to me that Graeme left part, at least, of his old self there with his dead friend and comrade in the quiet country churchyard. I waited long for the old careless, reckless spirit to appear, but he was never the same again. The change was unmistakable, but hard to define. He seemed to have resolved his life into a definite purpose. He was hardly so comfortable a fellow to be with; he made me feel even more lazy and useless than was my wont; but I respected him more and liked him none the less. As a lion he was not a success. He would not roar. This was disappointing to me and to his friends and mine, who had been waiting his return with eager expectation of tales of thrilling and bloodthirsty adventure.

His first days were spent in making right, or as nearly right as he could, the break that drove him to the West. His old firm (and I have had

more respect for the humanity of lawyers ever since) behaved really well. They proved the restoration of their confidence in his integrity and ability by offering him a place in the firm, which, however, he would not accept. Then, when he felt clean, as he said, he posted off home, taking me with him. During the railroad journey of four hours he hardly spoke; but when we had left the town behind and had fairly got upon the country road that led toward the home ten miles away, his speech came to him in a great flow. His spirits ran over. He was like a boy returning from his first college term. His very face wore the boy's open, innocent, earnest look that used to attract men to him in his first college year. His delight in the fields and woods in the sweet country air and the sunlight was without bound. How often had we driven this road together in the old days!

Every turn was familiar. The swamp where the tamaracks stood straight and slim out of their beds of moss; the brule, as we used to call it, where the pine stumps, huge and blackened, were half hidden by the new growth of poplars and soft maples; the big hill where we used to get out and walk when the roads were bad; the orchards where the harvest apples were best and most accessible—all had their memories.

It was one of those perfect afternoons that so often come in the early Canadian summer, before nature grows weary with the heat. The white gravel road was trimmed on either side with turf of living green, close cropped by the sheep that wandered in flocks along its whole length. Beyond the picturesque snake-fences stretched the fields of springing grain, of varying shades of green, with here and there a dark brown patch, marking a turnip field or summer fallow, and far back were the woods of maple and beech and elm, with here and there the tufted top of a mighty pine, the lonely representative of a vanished race, standing clear above the humbler trees.

As we drove through the big swamp, where the yawning, haunted gully plunges down to its gloomy depths, Graeme reminded me of that night when our horse saw something in that same gully and refused to go past; and I felt again, though it was broad daylight, something of the grue that shivered down my back as I saw in the moonlight the gleam of a white thing far through the pine trunks.

As we came nearer home the houses became familiar. Every house had its tale: we had eaten or slept in most of them; we had sampled apples, and cherries, and plums from their orchards, openly as guests or secretly as marauders under

cover of night—the more delightful way, I fear. Ah! happy days, with these innocent crimes and fleeting remorse, how bravely we faced them, and how gaily we lived them, and how yearningly we look back at them now! The sun was just dipping into the tree-tops of the distant woods behind as we came to the top of the last hill that overlooked the valley in which lay the village of Riverdale. Wooded hills stood about it on three sides, and where the hills faded out there lay the mill-pond sleeping and smiling in the sun. Through the village ran the white road, up past the old frame church, and on to the white manse standing among the trees. That was Graeme's home, and mine too, for I had never known another worthy of the name. We held up our team to look down over the valley, with its rampart of wooded hills, its shining pond, and its nestling village, and on past to the church and the white manse hiding among the trees. The beauty, the peace, the warm, loving homeliness of the scene came about our hearts, but, being men, we could find no words.

“Let's go,” cried Graeme, and down the hill we tore and rocked and swayed, to the amazement of the steady team, whose education from the earliest years had impressed upon their minds the criminality of attempting to do anything but

walk carefully down a hill, at least for two-thirds of the way. Through the village, in a cloud of dust, we swept, catching a glimpse of a well-known face here and there and flinging a salutation as we passed, leaving the owner of the face rooted to his place in astonishment at the sight of Graeme whirling on in his old-time, well-known reckless manner. Only old Dunc M'Leod was equal to the moment, for as Graeme called out, "Hello, Dunc!" the old man lifted up his hands and called back in an awed voice: "Bless my soul! Is it yourself?"

"Stands his whisky well, poor old chap!" was Graeme's comment.

As we neared the church he pulled up his team, and we went quietly past the sleepers there, then again on the full run down the gentle slope, over the little brook, and up to the gate. He had hardly got his team pulled up before flinging me the lines, he was out over the wheel, for coming down the walk, with her hands lifted high, was a dainty little lady with the face of an angel. In a moment Graeme had her in his arms. I heard the faint cry, "My boy! my boy!" and got down on the other side to attend to my off horse, surprised to find my hands trembling and my eyes full of tears. Back upon the steps stood an old gentleman, with white hair and flowing

beard, handsome, straight, and stately—Graeme's father, waiting his turn.

“Welcome home, my lad,” was his greeting as he kissed his son, and the tremor of his voice and the sight of the two men kissing each other like women sent me again to my horses' heads.

“There's Connor, mother!” shouted out Graeme, and the dainty little lady, in her black silk and white lace, came out to me quickly with outstretched hands.

“You, too, are welcome home,” she said, and kissed me.

I stood with my hat off, saying something about being glad to come, but wishing that I could get away before I should make quite a fool of myself. For as I looked down upon that beautiful face, pale except for a faint flush upon each faded cheek, and read the story of pain endured and conquered, and as I thought of all the long years of waiting and of vain hoping, I found my throat dry and sore, and the words would not come. But her quick sense needed no words, and she came to my help.

“You will find Jack at the stable,” she said, smiling. “He ought to have been here.”

The stable! Why had I not thought of that before? Thankfully now my words came:

“Yes, certainly I'll find him, Mrs. Graeme. I



suppose he's as much of a scapegrace as ever," and off I went to look up Graeme's young brother, who had given every promise in the old days of development into as stirring a rascal as one could desire ; but who, as I found out later, had not lived these years in his mother's home for nothing.

"Oh, Jack's a good boy," she answered, smiling again as she turned toward the other two, now waiting for her upon the walk.

The week that followed was a happy one for us all ; but for the mother it was full to the brim with joy. Her sweet face was full of content and in her eyes rested a great peace. Our days were spent driving about among the hills, or strolling through the maple woods, or down into the tamarack swamp, where the pitcher plants and the swamp lilies and the marigold waved above the deep moss. In the evenings we sat under the trees on the lawn till the stars came out and the night dews drove us in. Like two lovers, Graeme and his mother would wander off together, leaving Jack and me to each other. Jack was reading for divinity and was really a fine, manly fellow, with all his brother's turn for Rugby, and I took to him amazingly ; but after the day was over we would gather about the supper-table, and the talk would be of all things

under heaven—art, football, theology. The mother would lead in all. How quick she was, how bright her fancy, how subtle her intellect, and through all a gentle grace, very winning and beautiful to see!

Do what I would, Graeme would talk little of the mountains and his life there.

“My lion will not roar, Mrs. Graeme,” I complained; “he simply will not.”

“You should twist his tail,” said Jack.

“That seems to be the difficulty, Jack,” said his mother, “to get hold of his tale.”

“Oh, mother,” groaned Jack; “you never did such a thing before! How could you? Is it this baleful Western influence?”

“I shall reform, Jack,” she replied brightly.

“But, seriously, Graeme,” I remonstrated, “you ought to tell your people of your life—that free, glorious life in the mountains.”

“Free! Glorious! To some men, perhaps!” said Graeme, and then fell into silence.

But I saw Graeme as a new man the night he talked theology with his father. The old minister was a splendid Calvinist, of heroic type, and as he discoursed of God’s sovereignty and election his face glowed and his voice rang out.

Graeme listened intently, now and then putting in a question, as one would a keen knife-thrust

into a foe. But the old man knew his ground and moved easily among his ideas, demolishing the enemy as he appeared with jaunty grace. In the full flow of his triumphant argument Graeme turned to him with sudden seriousness.

“Look here, father! I was born a Calvinist, and I can’t see how any one with a level head can hold anything else than that the Almighty has some idea as to how He wants to run His universe, and He means to carry out His idea and is carrying it out; but what would you do in a case like this?”

Then he told him the story of poor Billy Breen, his fight and his defeat.

“Would you preach election to that chap?”

The mother’s eyes were shining with tears.

The old gentleman blew his nose like a trumpet and then said gravely :

“No, my boy. You don’t feed babies with meat. But what came to him?”

Then Graeme asked me to finish the tale. After I had finished the story of Billy’s final triumph and of Craig’s part in it they sat long silent, till the minister, clearing his throat hard and blowing his nose more like a trumpet than ever, said with great emphasis :

“Thank God for such a man in such a place! I wish there were more of us like him.”

“I should like to see you out there, sir,” said Graeme admiringly. “You’d get them, but you wouldn’t have time for election.”

“Yes! yes!” said his father warmly. “I should love to have a chance just to preach election to these poor lads. Would I were twenty years younger!”

“It is worth a man’s life,” said Graeme earnestly.

His younger brother turned his face eagerly toward the mother. For answer she slipped her hand into his and said softly, while her eyes shone like stars :

“Some day, Jack, perhaps! God knows.”

But Jack only looked steadily at her, smiling a little and patting her hand.

“You’d shine there, mother,” said Graeme, smiling upon her. “You’d better come with me.”

She started and said firmly :

“With you?” It was the first hint he had given of his purpose. “You are going back?”

“What! as a missionary?” said Jack.

“Not to preach, Jack. I’m not orthodox enough,” looking at his father and shaking his head; “but to build railroads and lend a hand to some poor chap, if I can.”

“Could you not find work nearer home, my boy?” asked the father. “There is plenty of both kinds near us here, surely.”

“Lots of work, but not mine, I fear,” answered Graeme, keeping his eyes away from his mother’s face. “A man must do his own work.”

His voice was quiet and resolute, and glancing at the beautiful face at the end of the table, I saw in the pale lips and yearning eyes that the mother was offering up her first-born, that ancient sacrifice. But not all the agony of sacrifice could wring from her entreaty or complaint in the hearing of her sons. That was for other ears and for the silent hours of the night. And next morning when she came down to meet us her face was wan and weary, but it wore the peace of victory and a glory not of earth. Her greeting was full of dignity, sweet and gentle; but when she came to Graeme she lingered over him and kissed him twice. And that was all that any of us ever saw of that sore fight.

At the end of the week I took leave of them, and last of all of the mother.

She hesitated just a moment, then suddenly put her hands upon my shoulders and kissed me, saying softly :

“You are his friend. You will sometimes come to me?”

“Gladly, if I may,” I hastened to answer, for the sweet, brave face was too much to bear; and till she left us for that world of which she was a

part I kept my word, to my own great and lasting good. When Graeme met me in the city at the end of the summer he brought me her love, and then burst forth :

“ Connor, do you know, I have just discovered my mother ! I have never known her till this summer.”

“ More fool you,” I answered, for often had I, who had never known a mother, envied him his.

“ Yes, that is true,” he answered slowly ; “ but you cannot see until you have eyes.”

Before he set out again for the West I gave him a supper, asking the men who had been with us in the old 'varsity days. I was doubtful as to the wisdom of this, and was persuaded only by Graeme's eager assent to my proposal.

“ Certainly, let's have them,” he said. “ I shall be awful glad to see them ; great stuff they were.”

“ But, I don't know, Graeme. You see—well—hang it!—you know—you're different, you know.”

He looked at me curiously.

“ I hope I can still stand a good supper, and if the boys can't stand me, why, I can't help it. I'll do anything but roar, and don't you begin to work off your menagerie act—now, you hear me !”

“ Well, it is rather hard lines that when I have been talking up my lion for a year, and then finally secure him, he will not roar.”

“ Serve you right,” he replied quite heartlessly. “ But I’ll tell you what I’ll do--I’ll feed! Don’t you worry,” he adds soothingly; “ the supper will go.”

And go it did. The supper was of the best; the wines first class. I had asked Graeme about the wines.

“ Do as you like, old man,” was his answer. “ It’s your supper, but,” he added, “ are the men all straight?”

I ran them over in my mind.

“ Yes; I think so.”

“ If not, don’t you help them down; and anyway, you can’t be too careful. But don’t mind me. I am quit of the whole business from this out.”

So I ventured wines, for the last time, as it happened.

We were a quaint combination. Old “ Beetles,” whose nickname was prophetic of his future fame as a bugman, as the fellows irreverently said; “ Stumpy ” Smith, a demon bowler; Polly Lindsay, slow as ever and as sure as when he held the half-back line with Graeme, and used to make my heart stand still with terror at his cool delibera

tion. But he was never known to fumble nor to funk, and somehow he always got us out safe enough. Then there was Rattray—"Rat" for short—who, from a swell, had developed into a cynic with a sneer, awfully clever and a good enough fellow at heart. Little "Wig" Martin, the sharpest quarter ever seen, and big Barney Lundy, center scrimmage, whose terrific roar and rush had often struck terror to the enemy's heart, and who was Graeme's slave. Such was the party.

As the supper went on my fears began to vanish, for if Graeme did not "roar" he did the next best thing—ate and talked quite up to his old form. Now we played our matches over again, bitterly lamenting the "ifs" that had lost us the championships, and wildly approving the tackles that had saved, and the runs that had made the 'varsity crowd go mad with delight and had won for us. And as their names came up in talk we learned how life had gone with those who had been our comrades of ten years ago. Some success had lifted to high places; some failure had left upon the rocks; and a few lay in their graves.

But as the evening went on I began to wish that I had left out the wines, for the men began to drop an occasional oath, though I had let them know during the summer that Graeme was not



the man he had been. But Graeme smoked and talked and heeded not, till Rattray swore by that name most sacred of all ever borne by man. Then Graeme opened upon him in a cool, slow way :

“What an awful fool a man is to damn things as you do, Rat. Things are not damned. It is men who are; and that is too bad to be talked much about. But when a man flings out of his foul mouth the name of Jesus Christ”—here he lowered his voice—“it’s a shame—it’s more, it’s a crime.”

There was dead silence, then Rattray replied :

“I suppose you’re right enough, it is bad form; but crime is rather strong, I think.”

“Not if you consider who it is,” said Graeme with emphasis.

“Oh, come now,” broke in Beetles. “Religion is all right, is a good thing, and I believe a necessary thing for the race, but no one takes seriously any longer the Christ myth.”

“What about your mother, Beetles?” put in Wig Martin.

Beetles consigned him to the pit and was silent, for his father was an Episcopal clergyman and his mother a saintly woman.

“I fooled with that for some time, Beetles, but it won’t do. You can’t build a religion that will

take the devil out of a man on a myth. That won't do the trick. I don't want to argue about it, but I am quite convinced the myth theory is not reasonable, and, besides, it won't work."

"Will the other work?" asked Rattray with a sneer.

"Sure!" said Graeme. "I've seen it."

"Where?" challenged Rattray. "I haven't seen much of it."

"Yes, you have, Rattray, you know you have," said Wig again.

But Rattray ignored him.

"I'll tell you, boys," said Graeme. "I want you to know, anyway, why I believe what I do."

Then he told them the story of old man Nelson, from the old coast days, before I knew him, to the end. He told the story well. The stern fight, and the victory of the life, and the self-sacrifice, and the pathos of the death appeal to these men, who loved fight and could understand sacrifice.

"That's why I believe in Jesus Christ, and that's why I think it a crime to fling His name about!"

"I wish to heaven I could say that," said Beetles.

"Keep wishing hard enough and it will come to you," said Graeme.

“Look here, old chap,” said Rattray, “you’re quite right about this; I’m willing to own up. Wig is correct. I know a few, at least, of that stamp, but most of those who go in for that sort of thing are not much account.”

“For ten years, Rattray,” said Graeme in a downright, matter-of-fact way, “you and I have tried this sort of thing”—tapping a bottle—“and we got out of it all there is to be got, paid well for it, too, and—faugh! you know it’s not good enough, and the more you go in for it the more you curse yourself. So I have quit this and I am going in for the other.”

“What! going in for preaching?”

“Not much—railroading—money in it—and lending a hand to fellows on the rocks.”

“I say, don’t you want a center forward?” said big Barney in his deep voice.

“Every man must play his game in his place, old chap. I’d like to see you tackle it, though, right well,” said Graeme earnestly.

And so he did, in the after years, and good tackling it was. But that is another story.

“But I say, Graeme,” persisted Beetles, “about this business. Do you mean to say you go the whole thing—Jonah, you know, and the rest of it?”

Graeme hesitated, then said:

“I haven’t much of a creed, Beetles; don’t really know how much I believe. But,” by this time he was standing, “I do know that good is good and bad is bad, and good and bad are not the same. And I know a man’s a fool to follow the one and a wise man to follow the other, and,” lowering his voice, “I believe God is at the back of a man who wants to get done with bad. I’ve tried all that folly,” sweeping his hand over the glasses and bottles, “and all that goes with it, and I’ve done with it.”

“I’ll go you that far,” roared big Barney, following his old captain as of yore.

“Good man,” said Graeme, striking hands with him.

“Put me down,” said little Wig cheerfully.

Then I took up the word, for there rose before me the scene in the league saloon, and I saw the beautiful face with the deep shining eyes, and I was speaking for her again. I told them of Craig and his fight for these men’s lives. I told them, too, of how I had been too indolent to begin.

“But,” I said, “I am going this far from tonight,” and I swept the bottles into the champagne tub.

“I say,” said Polly Lindsay, coming up in his old style, slow but sure, “let’s all go in, say for five years.”

And so we did. We didn't sign anything, but every man shook hands with Graeme.

And as I told Craig about this a year later, when he was on his way back from his old-land trip to join Graeme in the mountains, he threw up his head in the old way and said, "It was well done. It must have been worth seeing. Old man Nelson's work is not done yet. Tell me again," and he made me go over the whole scene with all the details put in.

But when I told Mrs. Mavor, after two years had gone, she only said, "Old things are passed away, all things are become new ;" but the light glowed in her eyes till I could not see their color. But all that, too, is another story.

## CHAPTER XV.

## COMING TO THEIR OWN.

A MAN with a conscience is often provoking, sometimes impossible. Persuasion is lost upon him. He will not get angry, and he looks at one with such a faraway expression in his face that in striving to persuade him one feels earthly and even fiendish. At least this was my experience with Craig. He spent a week with me just before he sailed for the old land, for the purpose, as he said, of getting some of the coal dust and other grime out of him.

He made me angry the last night of his stay, and all the more that he remained quite sweetly unmoved. It was a strategic mistake of mine to tell him how Nelson came home to us, and how Graeme stood up before 'varsity chaps at my supper and made his confession and confused Rattray's easy-stepping profanity, and started his own five-year league. For all this stirred in Craig the hero, and he was ready for all sorts of heroic nonsense, as I called it. We talked of every-

thing but the one thing, and about that we said not a word till, bending low to poke my fire and to hide my face, I plunged :

“ You will see her, of course ? ”

He made no pretense of not understanding, but answered :

“ Of course.”

“ There’s really no sense in her staying over there,” I suggested.

“ And yet she is a wise woman,” he said, as if carefully considering the question.

“ Heaps of landlords never see their tenants, and they are none the worse.”

“ The landlords ? ”

“ No—the tenants.”

“ Probably, having such landlords.”

“ And as for the old lady, there must be some one in the connection to whom it would be a Godsend to care for her.”

“ Now, Connor,” he said quietly, “ don’t. We have gone over all there is to be said. Nothing new has come. Don’t turn it all up again.”

Then I played the heathen and raged, as Graeme would have said, till Craig smiled a little wearily and said :

“ You exhaust yourself, old chap. Have a pipe, do ; ” and after a pause he added in his own way :  
“ What would you have ? The path lies straight

from my feet. Should I quit it? I could not *so* disappoint you—and all of them.”

And I knew he was thinking of Graeme and the lads in the mountains he had taught to be true men. It did not help my rage, but it checked my speech; so I smoked in silence till he was moved to say:

“And after all, you know, old chap, there are great compensations for all losses; but for the loss of a good conscience toward God, what can make up?”

But, all the same, I hoped for some better result from his visit to Britain. It seemed to me that something must turn up to change such an unbearable situation.

The year passed, however, and when I looked into Craig's face again I knew that nothing had been changed, and that he had come back to take up again his life alone, more resolutely hopeful than ever.

But the year had left its mark upon him, too. He was a broader and deeper man. He had been living and thinking with men of larger ideas and richer culture, and he was far too quick in sympathy with life to remain untouched by his surroundings. He was more tolerant of opinions other than his own, but more unrelenting in his fidelity to conscience and more impatient of half-



heartedness and self-indulgence. He was full of reverence for the great scholars and the great leaders of men he had come to know.

“Great, noble fellows they are, and extraordinarily modest,” he said—“that is, the really great are modest. There are plenty of the other sort, neither great nor modest. And the books to be read! I am quite hopeless about my reading. It gave me a queer sensation to shake hands with a man who had written a great book. To hear him make commonplace remarks, to witness a faltering in knowledge—one expects these men to know everything—and to experience respectful kindness at his hands!”

“What of the younger men?” I asked.

“Bright, keen, generous fellows. In things theoretical, omniscient; but in things practical, quite helpless. They toss about great ideas as the miners lumps of coal. They can call them by their book names easily enough, but I often wondered whether they could put them into English. Some of them I coveted for the mountains. Men with clear heads and big hearts, and built after Sandy M’Naughton’s model. It does seem a sinful waste of God’s good human stuff to see these fellows potter away their lives among theories living and dead and end up by producing a book! They are all either making or going to make a

book. A good thing we haven't to read them. But here and there among them is some quiet chap who will make a book that men will tumble over each other to read."

Then we paused and looked at each other.

"Well?" I said.

He understood me.

"Yes!" he answered slowly, "doing great work. Every one worships her just as we do, and she is making them all do something worth while, as she used to make us."

He spoke cheerfully and readily, as if he were repeating a lesson well learned, but he could not humbug me. I felt the heartache in the cheerful tone.

"Tell me about her," I said, for I knew that if he would talk it would do him good. And talk he did, often forgetting me, till, as I listened, I found myself looking again into the fathomless eyes and hearing again the heart-searching voice. I saw her go in and out of the little red-tiled cottages and down the narrow back lanes of the village; I heard her voice in a sweet, low song by the bed of a dying child, or pouring forth floods of music in the great new hall of the factory town near by. But I could not see, though he tried to show me, the stately, gracious lady receiving the country folk in her home. He did not linger over

that scene, but went back again to the gate cottage where she had taken him one day to see Billy Breen's mother.

"I found the old woman knew all about me," he said simply enough, "but there were many things about Billy she had never heard, and I was glad to put her right on some points, though Mrs. Mavor would not hear it."

He sat silent for a little, looking into the coals; then went on in a soft, quiet voice:

"It brought back the mountains and the old days to hear again Billy's tones in his mother's voice and to see her sitting there in the very dress she wore the night of the league, you remember—some soft stuff with black lace about it—and to hear her sing as she did for Billy—ah! ah!"

His voice unexpectedly broke, but in a moment he was master of himself and begged me to forgive his weakness. I am afraid I said words that should not be said—a thing I never do, except when suddenly and utterly upset.

"I am getting selfish and weak," he said. "I must get to work. I am glad to get to work. There is much to do, and it is worth while, if only to keep one from getting useless and lazy."

"Useless and lazy!" I said to myself, thinking

of my life beside his and trying to get command of my voice, so as not to make quite a fool of myself. And for many a day those words goaded me to work and to the exercise of some mild self-denial. But more than all else, after Craig had gone back to the mountains, Graeme's letters from the railroad construction camp stirred one to do unpleasant duty long postponed and rendered uncomfortable my hours of most luxurious ease. Many of the old gang were with him, both of lumbermen and miners, and Craig was their minister. And the letters told of how he labored by day and by night along the line of construction, carrying his tent and kit with him, preaching straight sermons, watching by sick men, writing their letters, and winning their hearts, making strong their lives, and helping them to die well when their hour came. One day these letters proved too much for me, and I packed away my paints and brushes and made my vow unto the Lord that I would be "useless and lazy" no longer, but would do something with myself. In consequence, I found myself within three weeks walking the London hospitals, finishing my course, that I might join that band of men who were doing something with life, or, if throwing it away, were not losing it for nothing. I had finished being a fool. I hoped, at least a fool of

the useless and luxurious kind. The letter that came from Graeme, in reply to my request for a position on his staff, was characteristic of the man, both new and old, full of gayest humor and of most earnest welcome to the work.

Mrs. Mavor's reply was like herself :

"I knew you would not long be content with the making of pictures, which the world does not really need, and would join your friends in the dear West, making lives that the world needs so sorely."

But her last words touched me strangely :

"But be sure to be thankful every day for your privilege. . . . It will be good to think of you all, with the glorious mountains about you, and Christ's own work in your hands. . . . Ah ! how we would like to choose our work and the place in which to do it !"

The longing did not appear in the words, but I needed no words to tell me how deep and how constant it was. And I take some credit to myself that in my reply I gave her no bidding to join our band, but rather praised the work she was doing in her place, telling her how I had heard of it from Craig.

The summer found me religiously doing Paris and Vienna, gaining a more perfect acquaintance with the extent and variety of my own igno-

rance, and so fully occupied in this interesting and wholesome occupation that I fell out with all my correspondents, with the result of weeks of silence between us.

Two letters among the heap waiting on my table in London made my heart beat quick, but with how different feelings: one from Graeme telling me that Craig had been very ill and that he was to take him home as soon as he could be moved. Mrs. Mavor's letter told me of the death of the old lady who had been her care for the past two years, and of her intention to spend some months in her old home in Edinburgh. And this letter it is that accounts for my presence in a miserable, dingy, dirty little hall running off a close in the historic Cowgate, redolent of the glories of the splendid past and of the various odors of the evil-smelling present. I was there to hear Mrs. Mavor sing to the crowd of gamins that thronged the closes in the neighborhood and that had been gathered into a club by "a fine leddie frae the West End," for the love of Christ and His lost. This was an "at home" night, and the mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers, of all ages and sizes, were present. Of all the sad faces I had ever seen, those mothers carried the saddest and most wo-stricken. "Heaven pity us!" I found myself saying. "Is this the beau-

tiful, the cultured, the heaven-exalted city of Edinburgh? Will it not for this be cast down to hell some day if it repent not of its closes and their dens of defilement? Oh! the utter weariness, the dazed hopelessness of the ghastly faces! Do not the kindly, gentle church-going folk of the crescents and the gardens see them in their dreams, or are their dreams too heavenly for these ghastly faces to appear?"

I cannot recall the program of the evening, but in my memory gallery is a vivid picture of that face, sweet, sad, beautiful, alight with the deep glow of her eyes as she stood and sang to that dingy crowd. As I sat upon the window-ledge listening to the voice with its flowing song, my thoughts were far away, and I was looking down once more upon the eager, coal-grimed faces in the rude little church in Black Rock. I was brought back to find myself swallowing hard by an audible whisper from a wee lassie to her mother:

"Mither! See till yon man. He's greetin'."

When I came to myself she was singing "The Land o' the Leal," the Scotch "Jerusalem the Golden," immortal, perfect. It needed experience of the hunger-haunted Cowgate closes, chill with the black mist of an eastern haar, to feel the full bliss of the vision in the words—

“There’s nae sorrow there, Jean,  
There’s neither cauld nor care, Jean,  
The day is aye fair in  
The Land o’ the Leal.”

A land of fair, warm days, untouched by sorrow and care, would be heaven indeed to the dwellers of the Cowgate.

The rest of that evening is hazy enough to me now, till I find myself opposite Mrs. Mavor at her fire, reading Graeme’s letters; then all is vivid again.

I could not keep the truth from her. I knew it would be folly to try. So I read straight on till I came to the words :

“He has had mountain fever, whatever that may be, and he will not pull up again. If I can I shall take him home to my mother”—when she suddenly stretched out her hand, saying, “Oh, let me read!” and I gave her the letter. In a minute she had read it and began almost breathlessly :

“Listen! My life is much changed. My mother-in-law is gone; she needs me no longer. My solicitor tells me, too, that owing to unfortunate investments there is need of money, so great need that it is possible that either the estates or the works must go. My cousin has his all in the works—iron works, you know. It would be



wrong to have him suffer. I shall give up the estates—that is the best.”

She paused.

“ And come with me ! ” I cried.

“ When do you sail ? ”

“ Next week,” I answered eagerly.

She looked at me a few moments, and into her eyes there came a light soft and tender as she said :

“ I shall go with you.”

And so she did ; and no old Roman in all the glory of a triumph carried a prouder heart than I as I bore her and her little one from the train to Graeme’s carriage, crying :

“ I’ve got her ! ”

But his was the better sense, for he stood waving his hat and shouting, “ He’s all right,” at which Mrs. Mavor grew white ; but when she shook hands with him the red was in her cheek again.

“ It was the cable did it,” went on Graeme. “ Connor’s a great doctor ! His first case will make him famous. Good prescription—after mountain fever try a cablegram ! ”

And the red grew deeper in the beautiful face beside us.

Never did the country look so lovely. The woods were in their gayest autumn dress ; the

brown fields were bathed in a purple haze; the air was sweet and fresh with a suspicion of the coming frosts of winter. But in spite of all the road seemed long, and it was as if hours had gone before our eyes fell upon the white manse standing among the golden leaves.

“Let them go!” I cried as Graeme paused to take in the view, and down the sloping dusty road we flew on the dead run.

“Reminds one a little of Abe’s curves,” said Graeme as we drew up at the gate. But I answered him not, for I was introducing to each other the two best women in the world. As I was about to rush into the house Graeme seized me by the collar, saying:

“Hold on, Connor! You forget your place. You’re next.”

“Why, certainly,” I cried, thankfully enough. “What an ass I am!”

“Quite true,” said Graeme solemnly.

“Where is he?” I asked.

“At this present moment?” he asked in a shocked voice. “Why, Connor, you surprise me.”

“Oh, I see.”

“Yes,” he went on gravely, “you may trust my mother to be discreetly attending to her domestic duties. She is a great woman, my mother.”

I had no doubt of it, for at that moment she came out to us with little Marjorie in her arms.

“Yes,” he went on gravely, “you may trust my mother, I hope,” said Graeme; but she only smiled and said:

“Run away with your horses, you silly boy,” at which he solemnly shook his head.

“Ah, mother, you are deep—who would have thought it of you?”

That evening the manse overflowed with joy, and the days that followed were like dreams set to sweet music.

But for sheer wild delight, nothing in my memory can quite come up to the demonstration organized by Graeme, with assistance from Nixon, Shaw, Sandy, Abe, Geordie, and Baptiste, in honor of the arrival in camp of Mr. and Mrs. Craig. And, in my opinion, it added something to the occasion that after all the cheers for Mr. and Mrs. Craig had died away, and after all the hats had come down, Baptiste, who had never taken his eyes from that radiant face, should suddenly have swept the crowd into a perfect storm of cheers by excitedly seizing his toque and calling out in his shrill voice:

“By gar! tree cheer for Mrs. Mavor!”

And for many a day the men of Black Rock! would easily fall into the old and well-loved

name; but up and down the line of construction, in all the camps beyond the Great Divide, the new name became as dear as the old had ever been in Black Rock.

Those old wild days are long since gone into the dim distance of the past. They will not come again, for we have fallen into quiet times; but often in my quietest hours I feel my heart pause in its beat to hear again that strong, clear voice, like the sound of a trumpet, bidding us to be men; and I think of them all—Graeme, their chief, Sandy, Baptiste, Geordie, Abe, the Campbells, Nixon, Shaw, all stronger, better for their knowing of him, and then I think of Billy asleep under the pines, and of old man Nelson with the long grass waving over him in the quiet churchyard, and all my nonsense leaves me, and I bless the Lord for all His benefits, but chiefly for the day I met the missionary of Black Rock in the lumber camp among the Selkirks.

## ETHAN BRAND.

BARTRAM, the lime-burner, a rough, heavy-looking man, begrimed with charcoal, sat watching his kiln at nightfall, while his little son played at building houses with the scattered fragments of marble, when, on the hill-side below them, they heard a roar of laughter, not mirthful, but slow and even solemn, like a wind shaking the boughs of the forest.

“Father, what is that?” asked the little boy, leaving his play and pressing betwixt his father’s knees.

“Oh, some drunken man, I suppose,” answered the lime-burner; “some merry fellow from the bar-room in the village, who dared not laugh loud enough within doors, lest he should blow the roof of the house off. So here he is, shaking his jolly sides at the foot of Graylock.”

“But, father,” said the child, more sensitive than the obtuse, middle-aged clown, “he does not

laugh like a man that is glad. So the noise frightens me!"

"Don't be a fool, child!" cried the father gruffly. "You will never make a man, I do believe: there is too much of your mother in you. I have known the rustling of a leaf to startle you! Hark! Here comes the merry fellow now. You shall see that there is no harm in him."

Bartram and his little son, while they were talking thus, sat watching the same lime-kiln that had been the scene of Ethan Brand's solitary and meditative life before he began his search for the Unpardonable Sin. Many years, as we have seen, had now elapsed since that portentous night when the IDEA was first developed. The kiln, however, on the mountain-side stood unimpaired, and was in nothing changed since he had thrown his dark thoughts into the intense glow of its furnace, and melted them, as it were, into the one thought that took possession of his life. It was a rude, round, tower-like structure, about twenty feet high, heavily built of rough stones, and with a hillock of earth heaped about the larger part of its circumference, so that the blocks and fragments of marble might be drawn by cart-loads and thrown in at the top. There was an opening at the bottom of the tower,

like an oven-mouth, but large enough to admit a man in a stooping posture, and provided with a massive iron door. With the smoke and jets of flame issuing from the chinks and crevices of this door, which seemed to give admittance into the hill-side, it resembled nothing so much as the private entrance to the infernal regions which the shepherds of the Delectable Mountains were accustomed to show to pilgrims.

There are many such lime-kilns in that tract of country for the purpose of burning the white marble which composes a large part of the substance of the hills. Some of them, built years ago and long deserted, with weeds growing in the vacant round of the interior, which is open to the sky, and grass and wild flowers rooting themselves into the chinks of the stones, look already like relics of antiquity, and may yet be overspread with the lichens of centuries to come. Others, where the lime-burner still feeds his daily and night-long fire, afford points of interest to the wanderer among the hills, who seats himself on a log of wood or a fragment of marble to hold a chat with the solitary man. It is a lonesome and, when the character is inclined to thought, may be an intensely thoughtful occupation, as it proved in

the case of Ethan Brand, who had mused to such strange purpose in days gone by while the fire in this very kiln was burning.

The man who now watched the fire was of a different order, and troubled himself with no thoughts save the very few that were requisite to his business. At frequent intervals he flung back the clashing weight of the iron door, and, turning his face from the insufferable glare, thrust in huge logs of oak or stirred the immense brands with a long pole. Within the furnace were seen the curling and riotous flames and the burning marble, almost molten with the intensity of heat, while without the reflection of the fire quivered on the dark intricacy of the surrounding forest, and showed in the foreground a bright and ruddy little picture of the hut, the spring beside its door, the athletic and coal-begrimed figure of the lime-burner, and the half-frightened child shrinking into the protection of his father's shadow. And when again the iron door was closed, then reappeared the tender light of the half-full moon, which vainly strove to trace out the indistinct shapes of the neighboring mountains; and in the upper sky there was a flitting congregation of clouds, still faintly tinged with the rosy sunset,



though thus far down into the valley the sunshine had vanished long and long ago.

The little boy now crept still closer to his father as footsteps were heard ascending the hillside, and a human form thrust aside the bushes that clustered beneath the trees.

“Halloo! who is it?” cried the lime-burner, vexed at his son’s timidity, yet half infected by it. “Come forward and show yourself like a man, or I’ll fling this chunk of marble at your head.”

“You offer me a rough welcome,” said a gloomy voice as the unknown man drew nigh. “Yet I neither claim nor desire a kinder one, even at my own fireside.”

To obtain a distincter view Bartram threw open the iron door of the kiln, whence immediately issued a gush of fierce light that smote full upon the stranger’s face and figure. To a careless eye there appeared nothing very remarkable in his aspect, which was that of a man in a coarse brown country-made suit of clothes, tall and thin, with the staff and heavy shoes of a wayfarer. As he advanced he fixed his eyes, which were very bright, intently upon the brightness of the furnace, as if he beheld, or expected to behold, some object worthy of note-within it.

“Good-evening, stranger,” said the lime-burner; “whence come you so late in the day?”

“I come from my search,” answered the wayfarer; “for, at last, it is finished.”

“Drunk!—or crazy!” muttered Bartram to himself. “I shall have trouble with the fellow. The sooner I drive him away the better.”

The little boy, all in a tremble, whispered to his father and begged him to shut the door of the kiln, so that there might not be so much light, for that there was something in the man’s face which he was afraid to look at, yet could not look away from. And, indeed, even the lime-burner’s dull and torpid sense began to be impressed by an indescribable something in that thin, rugged, thoughtful visage with the grizzled hair hanging wildly about it, and those deeply-sunken eyes which gleamed like fires within the entrance of a mysterious cavern. But as he closed the door the stranger turned toward him and spoke in a quiet, familiar way that made Bartram feel as if he were a sane and sensible man after all.

“Your task draws to an end, I see,” said he. “This marble has already been burning three days. A few hours more will convert the stone to lime.”

“Why, who are you?” exclaimed the lime-burner. “You seem as well acquainted with my business as I am myself.”

“And well I may be,” said the stranger, “for I followed the same craft many a long year, and here, too, on this very spot. But you are a newcomer in these parts. Did you never hear of Ethan Brand?”

“The man that went in search of the Unpardonable Sin?” asked Bartram with a laugh.

“The same,” answered the stranger. “He has found what he sought, and therefore he comes back again.”

“What! then you are Ethan Brand himself?” cried the lime-burner in amazement. “I am a newcomer here, as you say, and they call it eighteen years since you left the foot of Graylock. But, I can tell you, the good folks still talk about Ethan Brand in the village yonder, and what a strange errand took him away from his lime-kiln. Well, and so you have found the Unpardonable Sin?”

“Even so,” said the stranger, calmly.

“If the question is a fair one,” proceeded Bartram, “where might it be?”

Ethan Brand laid his finger on his own heart.

“Here!” replied he.

And then, without mirth in his countenance, but as if moved by an involuntary recognition of the infinite absurdity of seeking throughout the world for what was the closest of all things to himself, and looking into every heart save his own for what was hidden in no other breast, he broke into a laugh of scorn. It was the same slow, heavy laugh that had almost appalled the lime-burner when it heralded the wayfarer’s approach.

The solitary mountain-side was made dismal by it. Laughter, when out of place, mistimed, or bursting forth from a disordered state of feeling, may be the most terrible modulation of the human voice. The laughter of one asleep, even if it be a little child, the madman’s laugh, the wild, screaming laugh of a born idiot, are sounds that we sometimes tremble to hear and would always willingly forget. Poets have imagined no utterance of fiends or hobgoblins so fearfully appropriate as a laugh. And even the obtuse lime-burner felt his nerves shaken as this strange man looked inward at his own heart and burst into laughter that rolled away into the night and was indistinctly reverberated among the hills.

“Joe,” said he to his little son, “scamper

down to the tavern in the village, and tell the jolly fellows there that Ethan Brand has come back, and that he has found the Unpardonable Sin."

The boy darted away on his errand, to which Ethan Brand made no objection, nor seemed hardly to notice it. He sat on a log of wood, looking steadfastly at the iron door of the kiln. When the child was out of sight, and his swift and light footsteps ceased to be heard treading first on the fallen leaves and then on the rocky mountain-path, the lime-burner began to regret his departure. He felt that the little fellow's presence had been a barrier between his guest and himself, and that he must now deal, heart to heart, with a man who, on his own confession, had committed the one only crime for which Heaven could afford no mercy. That crime, in its indistinct blackness, seemed to overshadow him. The lime-burner's own sins rose up within him, and made his memory riotous with a throng of evil shapes that asserted their kindred with the Master Sin, whatever it might be, which it was within the scope of man's corrupted nature to conceive and cherish. They were all of one family; they went to and fro between his breast and Ethan Brand's, and carried dark greetings from one to the other.

Then Bartram remembered the stories which had grown traditionary in reference to this strange man who had come upon him like a shadow of the night, and was making himself at home in his old place after so long absence that the dead people, dead and buried for years, would have had more right to be at home in any familiar spot than he. Ethan Brand, it was said, had conversed with Satan himself in the lurid blaze of this very kiln. The legend had been matter of mirth heretofore, but looked grisly now. According to this tale, before Ethan Brand departed on his search he had been accustomed to evoke a fiend from the hot furnace of the lime-kiln, night after night, in order to confer with him about the Unpardonable Sin, the man and the fiend each laboring to frame the image of some mode of guilt which could neither be atoned for nor forgiven. And with the first gleam of light upon the mountain-top the fiend crept in at the iron door, there to abide the intensest element of fire until again summoned forth to share in the dreadful task of extending man's possible guilt beyond the scope of Heaven's else infinite mercy.

While the lime-burner was struggling with the horror of these thoughts Ethan Brand rose from

the log and flung open the door of the kiln. The action was in such accordance with the idea in Bartram's mind that he almost expected to see the Evil One issue forth red hot from the raging furnace.

"Hold! hold!" cried he, with a tremulous attempt to laugh, for he was ashamed of his fears, although they overmastered him. "Don't, for mercy's sake, bring out your devil now!"

"Man!" sternly replied Ethan Brand, "what need have I of the devil? I have left him behind me, on my track. It is with such half-way sinners as you that he busies himself. Fear not because I open the door. I do but act by old custom, and am going to trim your fire, like a lime-burner as I was once."

He stirred the vast coals, thrust in more wood, and bent forward to gaze into the hollow prison-house of the fire, regardless of the fierce glow that reddened upon his face. The lime-burner sat watching him, and half suspected his strange guest of a purpose, if not to evoke a fiend, at least to plunge bodily into the flames and thus vanish from the sight of man. Ethan Brand, however, drew quietly back and closed the door of the kiln.

“I have looked,” said he, “into many a human heart that was seven times hotter with sinful passions than yonder furnace is with fire. But I found not there what I sought. No, not the Unpardonable Sin!”

“What is the Unpardonable Sin?” asked the lime-burner; and then he shrank further from his companion, trembling lest his question should be answered.

“It is a sin that grew within my own breast,” replied Ethan Brand, standing erect with a pride that distinguishes all enthusiasts of his stamp. “A sin that grew nowhere else! The sin of an intellect that triumphed over the sense of brotherhood with man and reverence for God, and sacrificed everything to its own mighty claims! The only sin that deserves a recompense of immortal agony! Freely, were it to do again, would I incur the guilt. Unshrinkingly I accept the retribution!”

“The man’s head is turned,” muttered the lime-burner to himself. “He may be a sinner like the rest of us—nothing more likely—but, I’ll be sworn, he is a madman too.”

Nevertheless, he felt uncomfortable at his situation alone with Ethan Brand on the wild moun-



tain-side, and was right glad to hear the rough murmur of tongues and the footsteps of what seemed a pretty numerous party stumbling over the stones and rustling through the underbrush. Soon appeared the whole lazy regiment that was wont to infest the village tavern, comprehending three or four individuals who had drunk flip beside the bar-room fire through all the winters, and smoked their pipes beneath the stoop through all the summers, since Ethan Brand's departure. Laughing boisterously, and mingling all their voices together in unceremonious talk, they now burst into the moonshine and narrow streaks of fire-light that illuminated the open space before the lime-kiln. Bartram set the door ajar again, flooding the spot with light, that the whole company might get a fair view of Ethan Brand, and he of them.

There, among other old acquaintances, was a once-ubiquitous man, now almost extinct, but whom we were formerly sure to encounter at the hotel of every thriving village throughout the country. It was the stage-agent. The present specimen of the genus was a wilted and smoke-dried man, wrinkled and red-nosed, in a smartly-cut brown bob-tailed coat with brass buttons, who

for a length of time unknown had kept his desk and corner in the bar-room, and was still puffing what seemed to be the same cigar that he had lighted twenty years before. He had great fame as a dry joker, though, perhaps, less on account of any intrinsic humor than from a certain flavor of brandy-toddy and tobacco smoke which impregnated all his ideas and expressions, as well as his person. Another well-remembered though strangely-altered face was that of Lawyer Giles, as people still called him in courtesy—an elderly ragamuffin in his soiled shirt-sleeves and tow-cloth trousers. This poor fellow had been an attorney in what he called his better days, a sharp practitioner, and in great vogue among the village litigants; but flip and sling and toddy and cocktails imbibed at all hours, morning, noon, and night, had caused him to slide from intellectual to various kinds and degrees of bodily labor, till at last, to adopt his own phrase, he slid into a soap-vat. In other words, Giles was now a soap-boiler in a small way. He had come to be but the fragment of a human being, a part of one foot having been chopped off by an axe, and an entire hand torn away by the devilish grip of a steam-engine. Yet, though the corporeal hand was gone, a spiritual

member remained; for, stretching forth the stump, Giles steadfastly averred that he felt an invisible thumb and fingers with as vivid a sensation as before the real ones were amputated. A maimed and miserable wretch he was, but one, nevertheless, whom the world could not trample on, and had no right to scorn, either in this or any previous stage of his misfortunes, since he had still kept up the courage and spirit of a man, asked nothing in charity, and with his one hand—and that the left one—fought a stern battle against want and hostile circumstances.

Among the throng, too, came another personage, who, with certain points of similarity to Lawyer Giles, had many more of difference. It was the village doctor, a man of some fifty years, whom, at an earlier period of his life, we introduced as paying a professional visit to Ethan Brand during the latter's supposed insanity. He was now a purple-visaged, rude and brutal, yet half-gentlemanly figure, with something wild, ruined, and desperate in his talk and in all the details of his gesture and manners. Brandy possessed this man like an evil spirit, and made him as surly and savage as a wild beast and as miserable as a lost soul; but there was supposed to be in him such wonder-

ful skill, such native gifts of healing, beyond any which medical science could impart, that society caught hold of him and would not let him sink out of its reach. So, swaying to and fro upon his horse and grumbling thick accents at the bedside, he visited all the sick-chambers for miles about among the mountain-towns, and sometimes raised a dying man, as it were, by miracle, or quite as often, no doubt, sent his patient to a grave that was dug many a year too soon. The doctor had an everlasting pipe in his mouth, and, as somebody said, in allusion to his habit of swearing, it was always alight with hell-fire.

These three worthies pressed forward and greeted Ethan Brand each after his own fashion, earnestly inviting him to partake of the contents of a certain black bottle, in which, as they averred, he would find something far better worth seeking for than the Unpardonable Sin. No mind which has wrought itself by intense and solitary meditation into a high state of enthusiasm can endure the kind of contact with low and vulgar modes of thought and feeling to which Ethan Brand was now subjected. It made him doubt—and, strange to say, it was a painful doubt—whether he had indeed found the Unpardonable Sin, and found it

within himself. The whole question on which he had exhausted life, and more than life, looked like a delusion.

“Leave me,” he said bitterly, “ye brute beasts, that have made yourselves so, shrivelling up your souls with fiery liquors! I have done with you. Years and years ago I groped into your hearts, and found nothing there for my purpose. Get ye gone!”

“Why, you uncivil scoundrel!” cried the fierce doctor, “is that the way you respond to the kindness of your best friends? Then let me tell you the truth. You have no more found the Unpardonable Sin than yonder boy Joe has. You are but a crazy fellow—I told you so twenty years ago—neither better nor worse than a crazy fellow, and the fit companion of old Humphrey here!”

He pointed to an old man, shabbily dressed, with long white hair, thin visage, and unsteady eyes. For some years past this aged person had been wandering about among the hills, inquiring of all travellers whom he met for his daughter. The girl, it seemed, had gone off with a company of circus performers, and occasionally tidings of her came to the village, and fine stories were told of her glittering appearance as she rode on horse-

back in the ring or performed marvellous feats on the tight-rope.

The white-haired father now approached Ethan Brand and gazed unsteadily into his face.

“They tell me you have been all over the earth,” said he, wringing his hands with earnestness. “You must have seen my daughter, for she makes a grand figure in the world and everybody goes to see her. Did she send any word to her old father, or say when she was coming back?”

Ethan Brand’s eye quailed beneath the old man’s. That daughter from whom he so earnestly desired a word of greeting was the Esther of our tale, the very girl whom, with such cold and remorseless purpose, Ethan Brand had made the subject of a psychological experiment, and wasted, absorbed, and perhaps annihilated her soul in the process.

“Yes,” murmured he, turning away from the hoary wanderer, “it is no delusion. There is an Unpardonable Sin!”

While these things were passing a merry scene was going forward in the area of cheerful light beside the spring and before the door of the hut. A number of the youth of the village, young men and girls, had hurried up the hill-side, impelled

by curiosity to see Ethan Brand, the hero of so many a legend familiar to their childhood. Finding nothing, however, very remarkable in his aspect—nothing but a sun-burnt wayfarer, in plain garb and dusty shoes, who sat looking into the fire as if he fancied pictures among the coals—these young people speedily grew tired of observing him. As it happened, there was other amusement at hand. An old German Jew, travelling with a diorama on his back, was passing down the mountain-road toward the village just as the party turned aside from it, and in hopes of eking out the profits of the day the showman had kept them company to the lime-kiln.

“Come, old Dutchman,” cried one of the young men, “let us see your pictures, if you can swear they are worth looking at.”

“Oh yes, captain,” answered the Jew—whether as a matter of courtesy or craft, he styled everybody “captain”—“I shall show you, indeed, some very superb pictures.”

So, placing his box in a proper position, he invited the young men and girls to look through the glass orifices of the machine, and proceeded to exhibit a series of the most outrageous scratchings and daubings as specimens of the fine arts that

ever an itinerant showman had the face to impose upon his circle of spectators. The pictures were worn out, moreover, tattered, full of cracks and wrinkles, dingy with tobacco-smoke, and otherwise in a most pitiable condition. Some purported to be cities, public edifices, and ruined castles in Europe; others represented Napoleon's battles and Nelson's sea-fights; and in the midst of these would be seen a gigantic brown hairy hand—which might have been mistaken for the Hand of Destiny, though, in truth, it was only the showman's—pointing its forefinger to various scenes of the conflict, while its owner gave historical illustrations. When, with much merriment at its abominable deficiency of merit, the exhibition was concluded, the German bade little Joe put his head into the box. Viewed through the magnifying glasses, the boy's round, rosy visage assumed the strangest imaginable aspect of an immense Titanic child, the mouth grinning broadly and the eyes and every other feature overflowing with fun at the joke. Suddenly, however, that merry face turned pale and its expression changed to horror, for this easily impressed and excitable child had become sensible that the eye of Ethan Brand was fixed upon him through the glass.



“You make the little man to be afraid, captain,” said the German Jew, turning up the dark and strong outline of his visage from his stooping posture. “But look again, and, by chance, I shall cause you to see somewhat that is very fine, upon my word.”

Ethan Brand gazed into the box for an instant, and then, starting back, looked fixedly at the German. What had he seen? Nothing, apparently, for a curious youth who had peeped in almost at the same moment beheld only a vacant space of canvas.

“I remember you now,” muttered Ethan Brand to the showman.

“Ah, captain,” whispered the Jew of Nuremberg, with a dark smile, “I find it to be a heavy matter in my show-box, this Unpardonable Sin! By my faith, captain, it has wearied my shoulders this long day to carry it over the mountain.”

“Peace!” answered Ethan Brand sternly, “or get thee into the furnace yonder!”

The Jew’s exhibition had scarcely concluded when a great elderly dog, who seemed to be his own master, as no person in the company laid claim to him, saw fit to render himself the object of public notice. Hitherto he had shown himself

a very quiet, well-disposed old dog, going round from one to another, and, by way of being sociable, offering his rough head to be patted by any kindly hand that would take so much trouble. But now, all of a sudden, this grave and venerable quadruped, of his own mere motion and without the slightest suggestion from anybody else, began to run round after his tail, which, to heighten the absurdity of the proceeding, was a great deal shorter than it should have been. Never was seen such headlong eagerness in pursuit of an object that could not possibly be attained; never was heard such a tremendous outbreak of growling, snarling, barking, and snapping, as if one end of the ridiculous brute's body were at deadly and most unforgivable enmity with the other. Faster and faster round about went the cur, and faster and still faster fled the unapproachable brevity of his tail, and louder and fiercer grew his yells of rage and animosity, until, utterly exhausted and as far from the goal as ever, the foolish old dog ceased his performance as suddenly as he had begun it. The next moment he was as mild, quiet, sensible, and respectable in his deportment as when he first scraped acquaintance with the company.

As may be supposed, the exhibition was greeted with universal laughter, clapping of hands, and shouts of encore, to which the canine performer responded by wagging all that there was to wag of his tail, but appeared totally unable to repeat his very successful effort to amuse the spectators.

Meanwhile, Ethan Brand had resumed his seat upon the log, and moved, it might be, by a perception of some remote analogy between his own case and that of this self-pursuing cur, he broke into the awful laugh which, more than any other token, expressed the condition of his inward being. From that moment the merriment of the party was at an end; they stood aghast, dreading lest the inauspicious sound should be reverberated around the horizon, and that mountain would thunder it to mountain, and so the horror be prolonged upon their ears. Then, whispering one to another that it was late, that the moon was almost down, that the August night was growing chill, they hurried homeward, leaving the lime-burner and little Joe to deal as they might with their unwelcome guest. Save for these three human beings, the open space on the hill-side was a solitude set in a vast gloom of forest. Beyond that darksome verge the fire-light glimmered on the

stately trunks and almost black foliage of pines intermixed with the lighter verdure of sapling oaks, maples, and poplars, while here and there lay the gigantic corpses of dead trees decaying on the leaf-strewn soil. And it seemed to little Joe—a timorous and imaginative child—that the silent forest was holding its breath until some fearful thing should happen.

Ethan Brand thrust more wood into the fire and closed the door of the kiln; then, looking over his shoulder at the lime-burner and his son, he bade rather than advised them to retire to rest.

“For myself, I cannot sleep,” said he. “I have matters that it concerns me to meditate upon. I will watch the fire, as I used to do in the old time.”

“And call the devil out of the furnace to keep you company, I suppose,” muttered Bartram, who had been making intimate acquaintance with the black bottle above mentioned. “But watch if you like, and call as many devils as you like. For my part, I shall be all the better for a snooze.—Come, Joe.”

As the boy followed his father into the hut he looked back at the wayfarer, and the tears came into his eyes, for his tender spirit had an intuition

of the bleak and terrible loneliness in which this man had enveloped himself.

When they had gone Ethan Brand sat listening to the crackling of the kindled wood and looking at the little spirits of fire that issued through the chinks of the door. These trifles, however, once so familiar, had but the slightest hold of his attention, while deep within his mind he was reviewing the gradual but marvellous change that had been wrought upon him by the search to which he had devoted himself. He remembered how the night dew had fallen upon him, how the dark forest had whispered to him, how the stars had gleamed upon him, a simple and loving man, watching his fire in the years gone by, and ever musing as it burned. He remembered with what tenderness, with what love and sympathy for mankind, and what pity for human guilt and woe he had first begun to contemplate those ideas which afterward became the inspiration of his life; with what reverence he had then looked into the heart of man, viewing it as a temple originally divine, and, however desecrated, still to be held sacred by a brother; with what awful fear he had deprecated the success of his pursuit and prayed that the Unpardonable Sin might never be revealed to him.

Then ensued that vast intellectual development which, in its progress, disturbed the counterpoise between his mind and heart. The Idea that possessed his life had operated as a means of education; it had gone on cultivating his powers to the highest point of which they were susceptible; it had raised him from the level of an unlettered laborer to stand on a star-lit eminence, whither the philosophers of the earth, laden with the lore of universities, might vainly strive to clamber after him. So much for the intellect! But where was the heart? That, indeed, had withered, had contracted, had hardened, had perished. It had ceased to partake of the universal throb. He had lost his hold of the magnetic chain of humanity. He was no longer a brother-man, opening the chambers or the dungeons of our common nature by the key of holy sympathy which gave him a right to share in all its secrets; he was now a cold observer, looking on mankind as the subject of his experiment, and at length converting man and woman to be his puppets, and pulling the wires that moved them to such degrees of crime as were demanded for his study.

Thus Ethan Brand became a fiend. He be-

gan to be so from the moment that his moral nature had ceased to keep the pace of improvement with his intellect. And now, as his highest effort and inevitable development—as the bright and gorgeous flower and rich, delicious fruit of his life's labor—he had produced the Unpardonable Sin!

“What more have I to seek? what more to achieve?” said Ethan Brand to himself. “My task is done, and well done.”

Starting from the log with a certain alacrity in his gait, and ascending the hillock of earth that was raised against the stone circumference of the lime-kiln, he thus reached the top of the structure. It was a space of perhaps ten feet across from edge to edge, presenting a view of the upper surface of the immense mass of broken marble with which the kiln was heaped. All these innumerable blocks and fragments of marble were red-hot and vividly on fire, sending up great spouts of blue flame, which quivered aloft and danced madly as within a magic circle, and sank and rose again with continual and multitudinous activity. As the lonely man bent forward over this terrible body of fire the blasting heat smote up against his person with a breath that, it

might be supposed, would have scorched and shrivelled him up in a moment.

Ethan Brand stood erect and raised his arms on high. The blue flames played upon his face, and imparted the wild and ghastly light which alone could have suited its expression; it was that of a fiend on the verge of plunging into his gulf of intensest torment.

“O Mother Earth,” cried he, “who art no more my mother and into whose bosom this frame shall never be resolved!—O mankind, whose brotherhood I have cast off, and trampled thy great heart beneath my feet!—O stars of heaven, that shone on me of old, as if to light me onward and upward!—farewell all, and for ever. Come, deadly element of Fire, henceforth my familiar friend! Embrace me as I do thee!”

That night the sound of a fearful peal of laughter rolled heavily through the sleep of the lime-burner and his little son; dim shapes of horror and anguish haunted their dreams, and seemed still present in the rude hovel when they opened their eyes to the daylight.

“Up, boy, up!” cried the lime-burner, staring about him. “Thank Heaven, the night is gone at last, and rather than pass such another I would



watch my lime-kiln, wide awake, for a twelve-month. This Ethan Brand, with his humbug of an Unpardonable Sin, has done me no such mighty favor in taking my place."

He issued from the hut, followed by little Joe, who kept fast hold of his father's hand. The early sunshine was already pouring its gold upon the mountain-tops, and though the valleys were still in shadow, they smiled cheerfully in the promise of the bright day that was hastening onward. The village, completely shut in by hills which swelled away gently about it, looked as if it had rested peacefully in the hollow of the great hand of Providence. Every dwelling was distinctly visible; the little spires of the two churches pointed upward and caught a fore-glimmering of brightness from the sun-gilt skies upon their gilded weather-cocks. The tavern was astir, and the figure of the old, smoke-dried stage-agent, cigar in mouth, was seen beneath the stoop. Old Graylock was glorified with a golden cloud upon his head. Scattered likewise over the breasts of the surrounding mountains there were heaps of hoary mists in fantastic shapes, some of them far down into the valley, others high up toward the summits, and still others, of

the same family of mist or cloud, hovering in the gold radiance of the upper atmosphere. Stepping from one to another of the clouds that rested on the hills, and thence to the loftier brotherhood that sailed in air, it seemed almost as if a mortal man might thus ascend into the heavenly regions. Earth was so mingled with sky that it was a day-dream to look at it.

To supply that charm of the familiar and homely which Nature so readily adopts into a scene like this, the stage-coach was rattling down the mountain-road, and the driver sounded his horn, while echo caught up the notes and intertwined them into a rich and varied and elaborate harmony of which the original performer could lay claim to little share. The great hills played a concert among themselves, each contributing a strain of airy sweetness.

Little Joe's face brightened at once.

"Dear father," cried he, skipping cheerily to and fro, "that strange man is gone, and the sky and the mountains all seem glad of it."

"Yes," growled the lime-burner with an oath, "but he has let the fire go down, and no thanks to him if five hundred bushels of lime are not

spoiled. If I catch the fellow hereabouts again, I shall feel like tossing him into the furnace."

With his long pole in his hand he ascended to the top of the kiln. After a moment's pause he called to his son.

"Come up here, Joe!" said he.

So little Joe ran up the hillock and stood by his father's side. The marble was all burnt into perfect, snow-white lime. But on its surface, in the midst of the circle—snow-white too, and thoroughly converted into lime—lay a human skeleton in the attitude of a person who, after long toil, lies down to long repose. Within the ribs, strange to say, was the shape of a human heart.

"Was the fellow's heart made of marble?" cried Bartram, in some perplexity at this phenomenon. "At any rate, it is burnt into what looks like special good lime; and, taking all the bones together, my kiln is half a bushel the richer for him."

So saying, the rude lime-burner lifted his pole, and, letting it fall upon the skeleton, the relics of Ethan Brand were crumbled into fragments.

## JOHN INGLEFIELD'S THANKSGIVING.

ON the evening of Thanksgiving day John Inglefield, the blacksmith, sat in his elbow-chair among those who had been keeping festival at his board. Being the central figure of the domestic circle, the fire threw its strongest light on his massive and sturdy frame, reddening his rough visage so that it looked like the head of an iron statue all aglow from his own forge and with its features rudely fashioned on his own anvil. At John Inglefield's right hand was an empty chair. The other places round the hearth were filled by the members of the family, who all sat quietly, while, with a semblance of fantastic merriment, their shadows danced on the wall behind them. One of the group was John Inglefield's son, who had been bred at college, and was now a student of theology at Andover. There was also a daughter of sixteen, whom nobody could look at without thinking of a rose-bud almost blossomed. The only other person at the fireside was Robert

## John Inglefield's Thanksgiving 303

Moore, formerly an apprentice of the blacksmith, but now his journeyman, and who seemed more like an own son of John Inglefield than did the pale and slender student.

Only these four had kept New England's festival beneath that roof. The vacant chair at John Inglefield's right hand was in memory of his wife, whom death had snatched from him since the previous Thanksgiving. With a feeling that few would have looked for in his rough nature, the bereaved husband had himself set the chair in its place next his own; and often did his eye glance thitherward, as if he deemed it possible that the cold grave might send back its tenant to the cheerful fireside, at least for that one evening. Thus did he cherish the grief that was dear to him. But there was another grief which he would fain have torn from his heart, or, since that could never be, have buried it too deep for others to behold, or for his own remembrance. Within the past year another member of his household had gone from him, but not to the grave. Yet they kept no vacant chair for her.

While John Inglefield and his family were sitting round the hearth, with the shadows dancing behind them on the wall, the outer door was

opened and a light footstep came along the passage. The latch of the inner door was lifted by some familiar hand, and a young girl came in, wearing a cloak and hood, which she took off and laid on the table beneath the looking-glass. Then, after gazing a moment at the fireside circle, she approached and took the seat at John Inglefield's right hand, as if it had been reserved on purpose for her.

"Here I am at last, father," said she. "You ate your Thanksgiving dinner without me, but I have come back to spend the evening with you."

Yes, it was Prudence Inglefield. She wore the same neat and maidenly attire which she had been accustomed to put on when the household work was over for the day, and her hair was parted from her brow in the simple and modest fashion that became her best of all. If her cheek might otherwise have been pale, yet the glow of the fire suffused it with a healthful bloom. If she had spent the many months of her absence in guilt and infamy, yet they seemed to have left no traces on her gentle aspect. She could not have looked less altered had she merely stepped away from her father's fireside for half an hour, and returned while the blaze was quivering upward from the

same brands that were burning at her departure. And to John Inglefield she was the very image of his buried wife, such as he remembered her on the first Thanksgiving which they had passed under their own roof. Therefore, though naturally a stern and rugged man, he could not speak unkindly to his sinful child, nor yet could he take her to his bosom.

"You are welcome home, Prudence," said he, glancing sideways at her, and his voice faltered. "Your mother would have rejoiced to see you, but she has been gone from us these four months."

"I know it, father, I know it," replied Prudence, quickly. "And yet, when I first came in, my eyes were so dazzled by the fire-light that she seemed to be sitting in this very chair."

By this time the other members of the family had begun to recover from their surprise, and became sensible that it was no ghost from the grave nor vision of their vivid recollections, but Prudence her own self. Her brother was the next that greeted her. He advanced and held out his hand affectionately, as a brother should; yet not entirely like a brother, for, with all his kindness, he was still a clergyman and speaking to a child of sin.

“Sister Prudence,” said he, earnestly, “I rejoice that a merciful Providence hath turned your steps homeward in time for me to bid you a last farewell. In a few weeks, sister, I am to sail as a missionary to the far islands of the Pacific. There is not one of these beloved faces that I shall ever hope to behold again on this earth. Oh, may I see all of them—yours and all—beyond the grave!”

A shadow flitted across the girl’s countenance.

“The grave is very dark, brother,” answered she, withdrawing her hand somewhat hastily from his grasp. “You must look your last at me by the light of this fire.”

While this was passing the twin-girl—the rosebud that had grown on the same stem with the castaway—stood gazing at her sister, longing to fling herself upon her bosom, so that the tendrils of their hearts might intertwine again. At first she was restrained by mingled grief and shame, and by a dread that Prudence was too much changed to respond to her affection, or that her own purity would be felt as a reproach by the lost one. But as she listened to the familiar voice, while the face grew more and more familiar, she forgot everything save that Prudence had come back.



Springing forward, she would have clasped her in a close embrace. At that very instant, however, Prudence started from her chair and held out both her hands with a warning gesture.

"No, Mary—no, my sister," cried she, "do not you touch me. Your bosom must not be pressed to mine."

Mary shuddered and stood still, for she felt that something darker than the grave was between Prudence and herself, though they seemed so near each other in the light of their father's hearth, where they had grown up together. Meanwhile, Prudence threw her eyes around the room in search of one who had not yet bidden her welcome. He had withdrawn from his seat by the fireside, and was standing near the door with his face averted, so that his features could be discerned only by the flickering shadow of the profile upon the wall. But Prudence called to him in a cheerful and kindly tone.

"Come, Robert," said she, "won't you shake hands with your old friend?"

Robert Moore held back for a moment, but affection struggled powerfully, and overcame his pride and resentment; he rushed toward Prudence, seized her hand, and pressed it to his bosom.!

“There, there, Robert!” said she, smiling sadly as she withdrew her hand; “you must not give me too warm a welcome.”

And now, having exchanged greetings with each member of the family, Prudence again seated herself in the chair at John Inglefield’s right hand. She was naturally a girl of quick and tender sensibilities, gladsome in her general mood, but with a bewitching pathos interfused among her merriest words and deeds. It was remarked of her, too, that she had a faculty, even from childhood, of throwing her own feelings like a spell over her companions. Such as she had been in her days of innocence, so did she appear this evening. Her friends, in the surprise and bewilderment of her return, almost forgot that she had ever left them or that she had forfeited any of her claims to their affection. In the morning, perhaps, they might have looked at her with altered eyes, but by the Thanksgiving fireside they felt only that their own Prudence had come back to them, and were thankful. John Inglefield’s rough visage brightened with the glow of his heart as it grew warm and merry within him; once or twice even he laughed till the room rang again, yet seemed startled by the echo of his own mirth. The grave

young minister became as frolicsome as a school-boy. Mary, too, the rosebud, forgot that her twin-blossom had ever been torn from the stem and trampled in the dust. And as for Robert Moore, he gazed at Prudence with the bashful earnestness of love new-born, while she, with sweet maiden coquetry, half smiled upon and half discouraged him.

In short, it was one of those intervals when sorrow vanishes in its own depth of shadow, and joy starts forth in transitory brightness. When the clock struck eight Prudence poured out her father's customary draught of herb tea, which had been steeping by the fireside ever since twilight.

"God bless you, child!" said John Inglefield, as he took the cup from her hand; "you have made your old father happy again. But we miss your mother sadly, Prudence, sadly. It seems as if she ought to be here now."

"Now, father, or never," replied Prudence.

It was now the hour for domestic worship. But while the family were making preparations for this duty they suddenly perceived that Prudence had put on her cloak and hood and was lifting the latch of the door.

“Prudence, Prudence! where are you going?” cried they all with one voice.

As Prudence passed out of the door she turned toward them and flung back her hand with a gesture of farewell. But her face was so changed that they hardly recognized it. Sin and evil passions glowed through its comeliness and wrought a horrible deformity; a smile gleamed in her eyes, as of triumphant mockery at their surprise and grief.

“Daughter,” cried John Inglefield, between wrath and sorrow, “stay and be your father’s blessing, or take his curse with you!”

For an instant Prudence lingered and looked back into the fire-lighted room, while her countenance wore almost the expression as if she were struggling with a fiend who had power to seize his victim even within the hallowed precincts of her father’s hearth. The fiend prevailed, and Prudence vanished into the outer darkness. When the family rushed to the door they could see nothing, but heard the sound of wheels rattling over the frozen ground.

That same night, among the painted beauties at the theatre of a neighboring city, there was one whose dissolute mirth seemed inconsistent with

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any sympathy for pure affections and for the joys and griefs which are hallowed by them. Yet this was Prudence Inglefield. Her visit to the Thanksgiving fireside was the realization of one of those waking dreams in which the guilty soul will sometimes stray back to its innocence. But Sin, alas! is careful of her bond-slaves; they hear her voice, perhaps, at the holiest moment, and are constrained to go whither she summons them. The same dark power that drew Prudence Inglefield from her father's hearth—the same in its nature, though heightened then to a dread necessity—would snatch a guilty soul from the gate of heaven, and make its sin and its punishment alike eternal.

## MAJOR MOLINEUX.

AFTER the kings of Great Britain had assumed the right of appointing the colonial governors the measures of the latter seldom met with the ready and general approbation which had been paid to those of their predecessors under the original charters. The people looked with most jealous scrutiny to the exercise of power which did not emanate from themselves, and they usually rewarded their rulers with slender gratitude for the compliances by which, in softening their instructions from beyond the sea, they had incurred the reprehension of those who gave them. The annals of Massachusetts Bay will inform us that of six governors in the space of about forty years from the surrender of the old charter under James II., two were imprisoned by a popular insurrection; a third, as Hutchinson inclines to believe, was driven from the province by the whizzing of a musket-ball; a fourth, in the opinion of the same

historian, was hastened to his grave by continual bickerings with the House of Representatives; and the remaining two, as well as their successors till the Revolution, were favored with few and brief intervals of peaceful sway. The inferior members of the court party in times of high political excitement led scarcely a more desirable life. These remarks may serve as a preface to the following adventures, which chanced upon a summer night not far from a hundred years ago. The reader, in order to avoid a long and dry detail of colonial affairs, is requested to dispense with an account of the train of circumstances that had caused much temporary inflammation of the popular mind.

It was near nine o'clock of a moonlight evening when a boat crossed the ferry with a single passenger, who had obtained his conveyance at that unusual hour by the promise of an extra fare. While he stood on the landing-place searching in either pocket for the means of fulfilling his agreement, the ferryman lifted a lantern, by the aid of which and the newly-risen moon he took a very accurate survey of the stranger's figure. He was a youth of barely eighteen years, evidently country-bred, and now, as it should seem, upon his

first visit to town. He was clad in a coarse gray coat, well worn, but in excellent repair; his undergarments were durably constructed of leather, and fitted tight to a pair of serviceable and well-shaped limbs; his stockings of blue yarn were the incontrovertible work of a mother or a sister; and on his head was a three-cornered hat which in its better days had perhaps sheltered the graver brow of the lad's father. Under his left arm was a heavy cudgel formed of an oak sapling and retaining a part of the hardened root; and his equipment was completed by a wallet not so abundantly stocked as to incommode the vigorous shoulders on which it hung. Brown curly hair, well-shaped features, and bright cheerful eyes were Nature's gifts, and worth all that art could have done for his adornment.

The youth, one of whose names was Robin, finally drew from his pocket the half of a little province bill of five shillings, which, in the depreciation of that sort of currency, did but satisfy the ferryman's demand, with the surplus of a sexangular piece of parchment valued at three pence. He then walked forward into the town with as light a step as if his day's journey had not already exceeded thirty miles, and with as.



eager an eye as if he were entering London City, instead of the little metropolis of a New England colony. Before Robin had proceeded far, however, it occurred to him that he knew not whither to direct his steps, so he paused and looked up and down the narrow street, scrutinizing the small and mean wooden buildings that were scattered on either side.

“This low hovel cannot be my kinsman’s dwelling,” thought he, “nor yonder old house, where the moonlight enters at the broken casement; and, truly, I see none hereabouts that might be worthy of him. It would have been wise to inquire my way of the ferryman, and doubtless he would have gone with me and earned a shilling from the major for his pains. But the next man I meet will do as well.”

He resumed his walk; and was glad to perceive that the street now became wider and the houses more respectable in their appearance. He soon discerned a figure moving on moderately in advance, and hastened his steps to overtake it. As Robin drew nigh he saw that the passenger was a man in years, with a full periwig of gray hair, a wide-skirted coat of dark cloth, and silk stockings rolled above his knees. He carried a long

and polished cane which he struck down perpendicularly before him at every step, and at regular intervals he uttered two successive hems of a peculiarly solemn and sepulchral intonation. Having made these observations, Robin laid hold of the skirt of the old man's coat just when the light from the open door and windows of a barber's shop fell upon both their figures.

"Good-evening to you, honored sir," said he, making a low bow and still retaining his hold of the skirt. "I pray you tell me whereabouts is the dwelling of my kinsman, Major Molineux?"

The youth's question was uttered very loudly, and one of the barbers, whose razor was descending on a well-soaped chin, and another who was dressing a Ramillies wig, left their occupations and came to the door. The citizen in the mean time turned a long-favored countenance upon Robin, and answered him in a tone of excessive anger and annoyance. His two sepulchral hems, however, broke into the very centre of his rebuke with most singular effect, like a thought of the cold grave obtruding among wrathful passions.

"Let go my garment, fellow! I tell you I know not the man you speak of. What! I have authority, I have—hem, hem—authority; and if

this be the respect you show for your betters, your feet shall be brought acquainted with the stocks by daylight to-morrow morning."

Robin released the old man's skirt and hastened away, pursued by an ill-mannered roar of laughter from the barber's shop. He was at first considerably surprised by the result of his question, but, being a shrewd youth, soon thought himself able to account for the mystery.

"This is some country representative," was his conclusion, "who has never seen the inside of my kinsman's door, and lacks the breeding to answer a stranger civilly. The man is old, or verily I might be tempted to turn back and smite him on the nose. Ah, Robin, Robin! even the barber's boys laugh at you for choosing such a guide! You will be wiser in time, friend Robin."

He now became entangled in a succession of crooked and narrow streets which crossed each other and meandered at no great distance from the water-side. The smell of tar was obvious to his nostrils, the masts of vessels pierced the moonlight above the tops of the buildings, and the numerous signs which Robin paused to read informed him that he was near the centre of business. But the streets were empty, the shops were

closed, and lights were visible only in the second stories of a few dwelling-houses. At length, on the corner of a narrow lane through which he was passing, he beheld the broad countenance of a British hero swinging before the door of an inn whence proceeded the voices of many guests. The casement of one of the lower windows was thrown back, and a very thin curtain permitted Robin to distinguish a party at supper round a well-furnished table. The fragrance of the good cheer steamed forth into the outer air, and the youth could not fail to recollect that the last remnant of his travelling stock of provision had yielded to his morning appetite, and that noon had found, and left, him dinnerless.

“Oh that a parchment three-penny might give me a right to sit down at yonder table!” said Robin with a sigh. “But the major will make me welcome to the best of his victuals, so I will even step boldly in and inquire my way to his dwelling.”

He entered the tavern, and was guided by the murmur of voices and the fumes of tobacco to the public room. It was a long and low apartment, with oaken walls grown dark in the continual smoke, and a floor which was thickly sanded, but

of no immaculate purity. A number of persons, the larger part of whom appeared to be mariners or in some way connected with the sea, occupied the wooden benches or leather-bottomed chairs, conversing on various matters, and occasionally lending their attention to some topic of general interest. Three or four little groups were draining as many bowls of punch which the West India trade had long since made a familiar drink in the colony. Others, who had the appearance of men who lived by regular and laborious handicraft, preferred the insulated bliss of an unshared potation, and became more taciturn under its influence. Nearly all, in short, evinced a predilection for the Good Creature in some of its various shapes, for this is a vice to which, as Fast-day sermons of a hundred years ago will testify, we have a long hereditary claim. The only guests to whom Robin's sympathies inclined him were two or three sheepish countrymen who were using the inn somewhat after the fashion of a Turkish caravansary; they had gotten themselves into the darkest corner of the room, and, heedless of the nicotian atmosphere, were supping on the bread of their own ovens and the bacon cured in their own chimney-

smoke. But, though Robin felt a sort of brotherhood with these strangers, his eyes were attracted from them to a person who stood near the door, holding whispered conversation with a group of ill-dressed associates. His features were separately striking almost to grotesqueness, and the whole face left a deep impression on the memory. The forehead bulged out into a double prominence with a vale between; the nose came boldly forth in an irregular curve, and its bridge was of more than a finger's breadth; the eyebrows were deep and shaggy, and the eyes glowed beneath them like fire in a cave.

While Robin deliberated of whom to inquire respecting his kinsman's dwelling, he was accosted by the innkeeper, a little man in a stained white apron, who had come to pay his professional welcome to the stranger. Being in the second generation from a French Protestant, he seemed to have inherited the courtesy of his parent nation, but no variety of circumstances was ever known to change his voice from the one shrill note in which he now addressed Robin.

“From the country, I presume, sir?” said he, with a profound bow. “Beg leave to congratulate you on your arrival, and trust you intend a

long stay with us. Fine town here, sir, beautiful buildings, and much that may interest a stranger. May I hope for the honor of your commands in respect to supper?"

"The man sees a family likeness! the rogue has guessed that I am related to the major!" thought Robin, who had hitherto experienced little superfluous civility.

All eyes were now turned on the country lad standing at the door in his worn three-cornered hat, gray coat, leather breeches, and blue yarn stockings, leaning on an oaken cudgel and bearing a wallet on his back.

Robert replied to the courteous innkeeper with such an assumption of confidence as befitted the major's relative. "My honest friend," he said, "I shall make it a point to patronize your house on some occasion when"—here he could not help lowering his voice—"when I may have more than a parchment three-pence in my pocket. My present business," continued he, speaking with lofty confidence, "is merely to inquire my way to the dwelling of my kinsman, Major Molineux."

There was a sudden and general movement in the room, which Robin interpreted as expressing the eagerness of each individual to become his

guide. But the innkeeper turned his eyes to a written paper on the wall, which he read, or seemed to read, with occasional recurrences to the young man's figure.

“What have we here?” said he, breaking his speech into little dry fragments: “‘Left the house of the subscriber, bounden servant, Hezekiah Mudge; had on, when he went away, gray coat, leather breeches, master's third best hat. One pound currency reward to whosoever shall lodge him in any jail of the province.’ Better trudge, boy, better trudge!”

Robin had begun to draw his hand toward the lighter end of the oak cudgel, but a strange hostility in every countenance induced him to relinquish his purpose of breaking the courteous innkeeper's head. As he turned to leave the room, he encountered a sneering glance from the bold-featured personage whom he had before noticed, and no sooner was he beyond the door than he heard a general laugh, in which the innkeeper's voice might be distinguished, like the dropping of small stones into a kettle.

“Now, is it not strange,” thought Robin, with his usual shrewdness,—“is it not strange that the confession of **an** empty pocket should out-



weigh the name of my kinsman, Major Molineux? Oh, if I had one of those grinning rascals in the woods where I and my oak sapling grew up together, I would teach him that my arm is heavy, though my purse be light!"

On turning the corner of the narrow lane Robin found himself in a spacious street with an unbroken line of lofty houses on each side and a steepled building at the upper end, whence the ringing of a bell announced the hour of nine. The light of the moon and the lamps from the numerous shop-windows discovered people promenading on the pavement, and amongst them Robin hoped to recognize his hitherto inscrutable relative. The result of his former inquiries made him unwilling to hazard another in a scene of such publicity, and he determined to walk slowly and silently up the street, thrusting his face close to that of every elderly gentleman, in search of the major's lineaments. In his progress Robin encountered many gay and gallant figures. Embroidered garments of showy colors, enormous periwigs, gold-laced hats, and silver-hilted swords glided past him and dazzled his optics. Travelled youths, imitators of the European fine gentlemen of the period, trod jauntingly along, half danc-

ing to the fashionable tunes which they hummed, and making poor Robin ashamed of his quiet and natural gait. At length, after many pauses to examine the gorgeous display of goods in the shop-windows, and after suffering some rebukes for the impertinence of his scrutiny into people's faces, the major's kinsman found himself near the steepled building, still unsuccessful in his search. As yet, however, he had seen only one side of the thronged street, so Robin crossed, and continued the same sort of inquisition down the opposite pavement, with stronger hopes than the philosopher seeking an honest man, but with no better fortune. He had arrived about midway toward the lower end, from which his course began, when he overheard the approach of some one who struck down a cane on the flag-stones at every step, uttering at regular intervals two sepulchral hems.

"Mercy on us!" quoth Robin, recognizing the sound.

Turning a corner which chanced to be close at his right hand, he hastened to pursue his researches in some other part of the town. His patience now was wearing low, and he seemed to feel more fatigue from his rambles since he

crossed the ferry than from his journey of several days on the other side. Hunger also pleaded loudly within him, and Robin began to balance the propriety of demanding, violently and with lifted cudgel, the necessary guidance from the first solitary passenger whom he should meet. While a resolution to this effect was gaining strength he entered a street of mean appearance, on either side of which a row of ill-built houses was straggling toward the harbor. The moonlight fell upon no passenger along the whole extent, but in the third domicile which Robin passed there was a half-opened door, and his keen glance detected a woman's garment within.

“My luck may be better here,” said he to himself.

Accordingly, he approached the door, and beheld it shut closer as he did so; yet an opened space remained, sufficing for the fair occupant to observe the stranger without a corresponding display on her part. All that Robin could discern was a strip of scarlet petticoat and the occasional sparkle of an eye, as if the moonbeams were trembling on some bright thing.

“Pretty mistress”—for I may call her so with a good conscience, thought the shrewd youth, since

I know nothing to the contrary,—“my sweet pretty mistress, will you be kind enough to tell me whereabouts I must seek the dwelling of my kinsman, Major Molineux?”

Robin's voice was plaintive and winning, and the female, seeing nothing to be shunned in the handsome country youth, thrust open the door and came forth into the moonlight. She was a dainty little figure, with a white neck, round arms, and a slender waist, at the extremity of which her scarlet petticoat jutted out over a hoop, as if she were standing in a balloon. Moreover, her face was oval and pretty, her hair dark beneath the little cap, and her bright eyes possessed a sly freedom which triumphed over those of Robin.

“Major Molineux dwells here,” said this fair woman.

Now, her voice was the sweetest Robin had heard that night, the airy counterpart of a stream of melted silver, yet he could not help doubting whether that sweet voice spoke gospel truth. He looked up and down the mean street, and then surveyed the house before which they stood. It was a small dark edifice of two stories, the second of which projected over the lower floor, and the

front apartment had the aspect of a shop for petty commodities.

“Now truly I am in luck,” replied Robin, cunningly, “and so indeed is my kinsman, the major, in having so pretty a housekeeper. But I prithee trouble him to step to the door; I will deliver him a message from his friends in the country, and then go back to my lodgings at the inn.”

“Nay, the major has been a-bed this hour or more,” said the lady of the scarlet petticoat, “and it would be to little purpose to disturb him to-night, seeing his evening draught was of the strongest. But he is a kind-hearted man, and it would be as much as my life’s worth to let a kinsman of his turn away from the door. You are the good old gentleman’s very picture, and I could swear that was his rainy-weather hat. Also he has garments very much resembling those leather small-clothes. But come in, I pray, for I bid you hearty welcome in his name.”

So saying, the fair and hospitable dame took our hero by the hand, and the touch was light and the force was gentleness, and though Robin read in her eyes what he did not hear in her words, yet the slender-waisted woman in the scarlet petticoat proved stronger than the athletic

country youth. She had drawn his half-willing footsteps nearly to the threshold when the opening of a door in the neighborhood startled the major's housekeeper, and, leaving the major's kinsman, she vanished speedily into her own domicile. A heavy yawn preceded the appearance of a man who, like the Moonshine of Pyramus and Thisbe, carried a lantern, needlessly aiding his sister luminary in the heavens. As he walked sleepily up the street he turned his broad dull face on Robin and displayed a long staff spiked at the end.

"Home, vagabond, home!" said the watchman, in accents that seemed to fall asleep as soon as they were uttered. "Home, or we'll set you in the stocks by peep of day!"

"This is the second hint of the kind," thought Robin. "I wish they would end my difficulties by setting me there to-night."

Nevertheless, the youth felt an instinctive antipathy toward the guardian of midnight order which at first prevented him from asking his usual question. But just when the man was about to vanish behind the corner Robin resolved not to lose the opportunity, and shouted lustily after him:

“ I say, friend, will you guide me to the house of my kinsman, Major Molineux ? ”

The watchman made no reply, but turned the corner and was gone; yet Robin seemed to hear the sound of drowsy laughter stealing along the solitary street. At that moment also a pleasant titter saluted him from the open window above his head; he looked up and caught the sparkle of a sauey eye; a round arm beckoned to him, and next he heard light footsteps descending the staircase within. But Robin, being of the household of a New England clergyman, was a good youth as well as a shrewd one, so he resisted temptation and fled away.

He now roamed desperately and at random through the town, almost ready to believe that a spell was on him like that by which a wizard of his country had once kept three pursuers wandering a whole winter night within twenty paces of the cottage which they sought. The streets lay before him strange and desolate, and the lights were extinguished in almost every house. Twice, however, little parties of men, among whom Robin distinguished individuals in outlandish attire, came hurrying along, but though on both occasions they paused to address him, such intercourse

did not at all enlighten his perplexity. They did but utter a few words in some language of which Robin knew nothing, and, perceiving his inability to answer, bestowed a curse upon him in plain English and hastened away. Finally, the lad had determined to knock at the door of every mansion that might appear worthy to be occupied by his kinsman, trusting that perseverance would overcome the fatality that had hitherto thwarted him. Firm in this resolve, he was passing beneath the walls of a church which formed the corner of two streets when, as he turned into the shade of its steeple, he encountered a bulky stranger muffled in a cloak. The man was proceeding with the speed of earnest business, but Robin planted himself full before him, holding the oak cudgel with both hands across his body as a bar to further passage.

“Halt, honest man, and answer me a question,” said he very resolutely. “Tell me, this instant, whereabouts is the dwelling of my kinsman, Major Molineux!”

“Keep your tongue between your teeth, fool, and let me pass,” said a deep gruff voice, which Robin partly remembered. “Let me pass, I say, or I’ll strike you to the earth!”



“No, no, neighbor!” cried Robin, flourishing his cudgel, and then thrusting its larger end close to the man’s muffled face. “No, no, I’m not the fool you take me for, nor do you pass till I have an answer to my question. Whereabouts is the dwelling of my kinsman, Major Molineux?”

The stranger, instead of attempting to force his passage, stepped back into the moonlight, unmuffled his face, and stared full into that of Robin.

“Watch here an hour, and Major Molineux will pass by,” said he.

Robin gazed with dismay and astonishment on the unprecedented physiognomy of the speaker. The forehead with its double prominence, the broad hooked nose, the shaggy eyebrows, and fiery eyes were those which he had noticed at the inn, but the man’s complexion had undergone a singular, or, more properly, a twofold, change. One side of the face blazed an intense red, while the other was black as midnight, the division-line being in the broad bridge of the nose; and a mouth which seemed to extend from ear to ear was black or red in contrast to the color of the cheek. The effect was as if two individual devils, a fiend of fire and a fiend of darkness, had united themselves

to form this infernal visage. The stranger grinned in Robin's face, muffled his parti-colored features, and was out of sight in a moment.

“Strange things we travellers see!” ejaculated Robin.

He seated himself, however, upon the steps of the church-door, resolving to wait the appointed time for his kinsman. A few moments were consumed in philosophical speculations upon the species of man who had just left him; but, having settled this point shrewdly, rationally, and satisfactorily, he was compelled to look elsewhere for his amusement. And first he threw his eyes along the street. It was of more respectable appearance than most of those into which he had wandered, and the moon, creating, like the imaginative power, a beautiful strangeness in familiar objects, gave something of romance to a scene that might not have possessed it in the light of day. The irregular and often quaint architecture of the houses, some of whose roofs were broken into numerous little peaks, while others ascended, steep and narrow, into a single point, and others again were square; the pure snow-white of some of their complexions, the aged darkness of others, and the thousand sparklings reflected from bright sub-

stances in the walls of many,—these matters engaged Robin's attention for a while, and then began to grow wearisome. Next he endeavored to define the forms of distant objects, starting away, with almost ghostly indistinctness, just as his eye appeared to grasp them; and finally he took a minute survey of an edifice which stood on the opposite side of the street, directly in front of the church-door where he was stationed. It was a large square mansion, distinguished from its neighbors by a balcony which rested on tall pillars, and by an elaborate Gothic window communicating therewith.

“Perhaps this is the very house I have been seeking,” thought Robin.

Then he strove to speed away the time by listening to a murmur which swept continually along the street, yet was scarcely audible, except to an unaccustomed ear like his; it was a low, dull, dreamy sound, compounded of many noises, each of which was at too great a distance to be separately heard. Robin marvelled at this snore of a sleeping town, and marvelled more whenever its continuity was broken by now and then a distant shout, apparently loud where it originated. But altogether it was a sleep-inspiring sound, and to

shake off its drowsy influence Robin arose and climbed a window-frame, that he might view the interior of the church. There the moonbeams came trembling in, and fell down upon the deserted pews and extended along the quiet aisles. A fainter yet more awful radiance was hovering around the pulpit, and one solitary ray had dared to rest upon the opened page of the great Bible. Had Nature, in that deep hour, become a worshipper in the house which man had builded? Or was that heavenly light the visible sanctity of the place—visible because no earthly and impure feet were within the walls? The scene made Robin's heart shiver with a sensation of loneliness stronger than he had ever felt in the remotest depths of his native woods; so he turned away and sat down again before the door. There were graves around the church, and now an uneasy thought obtruded into Robin's breast. What if the object of his search, which had been so often and so strangely thwarted, were all the time mouldering in his shroud? What if his kinsman should glide through yonder gate, and nod and smile to him in dimly passing by?

“Oh that any breathing thing were here with me!” said Robin.

Recalling his thoughts from this uncomfortable track, he sent them over forest, hill, and stream, and attempted to imagine how that evening of ambiguity and weariness had been spent by his father's household. He pictured them assembled at the door, beneath the tree, the great old tree, which had been spared for its huge twisted trunk and venerable shade when a thousand leafy brethren fell. There, at the going down of the summer sun, it was his father's custom to perform domestic worship, that the neighbors might come and join with him like brothers of the family, and that the wayfaring man might pause to drink at that fountain and keep his heart pure by freshening the memory of home. Robin distinguished the seat of every individual of the little audience; he saw the good man in the midst holding the Scriptures in the golden light that fell from the western clouds; he beheld him close the book, and all rise up to pray. He heard the old thanksgivings for daily mercies, the old supplications for their continuance, to which he had so often listened in weariness, but which were now among his dear remembrances. He perceived the slight inequality of his father's voice when he came to speak of the absent one; he

noted how his mother turned her face to the broad and knotted trunk; how his elder brother scorned, because the beard was rough upon his upper lip, to permit his features to be moved; how the younger sister drew down a low-hanging branch before her eyes; and how the little one of all, whose sports had hitherto broken the decorum of the scene, understood the prayer for her playmate and burst into clamorous grief. Then he saw them go in at the door, and when Robin would have entered also the latch tinkled into its place and he was excluded from his home.

“Am I here or there?” cried Robin, starting, for all at once, when his thoughts had become visible and audible in a dream, the long, wide, solitary street shone out before him.

He aroused himself and endeavored to fix his attention steadily upon the large edifice which he had surveyed before, but still his mind kept vibrating between fancy and reality; by turns the pillars of the balcony lengthened into the tall bare stems of pines, dwindled down to human figures, settled again into their true shape and size, and then commenced a new succession of changes. For a single moment, when he deemed himself awake, he could have sworn that a visage

—one which he seemed to remember, yet could not absolutely name as his kinsman's—was looking toward him from the Gothic window. A deeper sleep wrestled with and nearly overcame him, but fled at the sound of footsteps along the opposite pavement. Robin rubbed his eyes, discerned a man passing at the foot of the balcony, and addressed him in a loud, peevish, and lamentable cry:

“Hallo, friend! must I wait here all night for my kinsman, Major Molineux?”

The sleeping echoes awoke and answered the voice, and the passenger, barely able to discern a figure sitting in the oblique shade of the steeple, traversed the street to obtain a nearer view. He was himself a gentleman in his prime, of open, intelligent, cheerful, and altogether prepossessing countenance. Perceiving a country youth, apparently homeless and without friends, he accosted him in a tone of real kindness which had become strange to Robin's ears.

“Well, my good lad, why are you sitting here?” inquired he. “Can I be of service to you in any way?”

“I am afraid not, sir,” replied Robin, despondingly; “yet I shall take it kindly if you'll answer

me a single question. I've been searching half the night for one Major Molineux; now, sir, is there really such a person in these parts, or am I dreaming?"

"Major Molineux! The name is not altogether strange to me," said the gentleman, smiling. "Have you any objections to telling me the nature of your business with him?"

Then Robin briefly related that his father was a clergyman, settled on a small salary at a long distance back in the country, and that he and Major Molineux were brothers' children. The major, having inherited riches and acquired civil and military rank, had visited his cousin in great pomp a year or two before, had manifested much interest in Robin and an elder brother, and, being childless himself, had thrown out hints respecting the future establishment of one of them in life. The elder brother was destined to succeed to the farm which his father cultivated in the interval of sacred duties; it was therefore determined that Robin should profit by his kinsman's generous intentions, especially as he seemed to be rather the favorite and was thought to possess other necessary endowments.

"For I have the name of being a shrewd



youth," observed Robin in this part of his story.

"I doubt not you deserve it," replied his new friend, good-naturedly; "but pray proceed."

"Well, sir, being nearly eighteen years old and well-grown, as you see," continued Robin, drawing himself up to his full height, "I thought it high time to begin the world. So my mother and sister put me in handsome trim, and my father gave me half the remnant of his last year's salary, and five days ago I started for this place to pay the major a visit. But, would you believe it, sir, I crossed the ferry a little after dark, and have yet found nobody that would show me the way to his dwelling; only, an hour or two since, I was told to wait here and Major Molineux would pass by."

"Can you describe the man who told you this?" inquired the gentleman.

"Oh, he was a very ill-favored fellow, sir," replied Robin, "with two great bumps on his forehead, a hook nose, fiery eyes, and, what struck me as the strangest, his face was of two different colors. Do you happen to know such a man, sir?"

"Not intimately," answered the stranger, "but I chanced to meet him a little time previous to

your stopping me. I believe you may trust his word, and that the major will very shortly pass through this street. In the mean time, as I have a singular curiosity to witness your meeting, I will sit down here upon the steps and bear you company."

He seated himself accordingly, and soon engaged his companion in animated discourse. It was but of brief continuance, however, for a noise of shouting which had long been remotely audible drew so much nearer that Robin inquired its cause.

"What may be the meaning of this uproar?" asked he. "Truly, if your town be always as noisy, I shall find little sleep while I am an inhabitant."

"Why, indeed, friend Robin, there do appear to be three or four riotous fellows abroad to-night," replied the gentleman. "You must not expect all the stillness of your native woods here in our streets. But the watch will shortly be at the heels of these lads, and—"

"Ay, and set them in the stocks by peep of day," interrupted Robin, recollecting his own encounter with the drowsy lantern-bearer. "But, dear sir, if I may trust my ears, an army of

watchmen would never make head against such a multitude of rioters. There were at least a thousand voices went up to make that one shout."

"May not a man have several voices, Robin, as well as two complexions?" said his friend.

"Perhaps a man may, but Heaven forbid that a woman should!" responded the shrewd youth, thinking of the seductive tones of the major's housekeeper.

The sounds of a trumpet in some neighboring street now became so evident and continual that Robin's curiosity was strongly excited. In addition to the shouts, he heard frequent bursts from many instruments of discord, and a wild and confused laughter filled up the intervals. Robin rose from the steps and looked wistfully toward a point whither several people seemed to be hastening.

"Surely some prodigious merry-making is going on," exclaimed he. "I have laughed very little since I left home, sir, and should be sorry to lose an opportunity. Shall we step round the corner by that darkish house and take our share of the fun?"

"Sit down again, sit down, good Robin," replied the gentleman, laying his hand on the skirt

of the gray coat. "You forget that we must wait here for your kinsman, and there is reason to believe that he will pass by in the course of a very few moments."

The near approach of the uproar had now disturbed the neighborhood; windows flew open on all sides, and many heads, in the attire of the pillow and confused by sleep suddenly broken, were protruded to the gaze of whoever had leisure to observe them. Eager voices hailed each other from house to house, all demanding the explanation which not a soul could give. Half-dressed men hurried toward the unknown commotion, stumbling as they went over the stone steps that thrust themselves into the narrow foot-walk. The shouts, the laughter, and the tuneless bray, the antipodes of music, came onward with increasing din, till scattered individuals and then denser bodies began to appear round a corner at the distance of a hundred yards.

"Will you recognize your kinsman if he passes in this crowd?" inquired the gentleman.

"Indeed, I can't warrant it, sir, but I'll take my stand here and keep a bright look-out," answered Robin, descending to the outer edge of the pavement.

A mighty stream of people now emptied into the street and came rolling slowly toward the church. A single horseman wheeled the corner in the midst of them, and close behind him came a band of fearful wind-instruments, sending forth a fresher discord now that no intervening buildings kept it from the ear. Then a redder light disturbed the moonbeams, and a dense multitude of torches shone along the street, concealing by their glare whatever object they illuminated. The single horseman, clad in a military dress and bearing a drawn sword, rode onward as the leader, and by his fierce and variegated countenance appeared like war personified: the red of one cheek was an emblem of fire and sword; the blackness of the other betokened the mourning that attends them. In his train were wild figures in the Indian dress and many fantastic shapes without a model, giving the whole march a visionary air, as if a dream had broken forth from some feverish brain and were sweeping visibly through the midnight streets. A mass of people, inactive except as applauding spectators, hemmed the procession in, and several women ran along the sidewalk, piercing the confusion of heavier sounds with their shrill voices of mirth or terror.

“The double-faced fellow has his eye upon me,” muttered Robin, with an indefinite but an uncomfortable idea that he himself was to bear a part in the pageantry.

The leader turned himself in the saddle and fixed his glance full upon the country youth as the steed went slowly by. When Robin had freed his eyes from those fiery ones the musicians were passing before him and the torches were close at hand, but the unsteady brightness of the latter formed a veil which he could not penetrate. The rattling of wheels over the stones sometimes found its way to his ear, and confused traces of a human form appeared at intervals and then melted into the vivid light. A moment more and the leader thundered a command to halt: the trumpets vomited a horrid breath and then held their peace; the shouts and laughter of the people died away, and there remained only a universal hum allied to silence. Right before Robin’s eyes was an uncovered cart. There the torches blazed the brightest, there the moon shone out like day, and there, in tar-and-feathery dignity, sat his kinsman, Major Molineux!

He was an elderly man, of large and majestic person, and strong square features betokening a

steady soul; but, steady as it was, his enemies had found means to shake it. His face was pale as death and far more ghastly; the broad forehead was contracted in his agony, so that his eyebrows formed one grizzled line; his eyes were red and wild, and the foam hung white upon his quivering lip. His whole frame was agitated by a quick and continual tremor, which his pride strove to quell even in those circumstances of overwhelming humiliation. But perhaps the bitterest pang of all was when his eyes met those of Robin, for he evidently knew him on the instant as the youth stood witnessing the foul disgrace of a head grown gray in honor. They stared at each other in silence, and Robin's knees shook and his hair bristled with a mixture of pity and terror. Soon, however, a bewildering excitement began to seize upon his mind; the preceding adventures of the night, the unexpected appearance of the crowd, the torches, the confused din and the hush that followed, the spectre of his kinsman reviled by that great multitude,—all this, and, more than all, a perception of tremendous ridicule in the whole scene, affected him with a sort of mental inebriety. At that moment a voice of sluggish merriment saluted Robin's ears; he turned instinct-

ively, and just behind the corner of the church stood the lantern-bearer, rubbing his eyes and drowsily enjoying the lad's amazement. Then he heard a peal of laughter like the ringing of silvery bells; a woman twitched his arm, a saucy eye met his, and he saw the lady of the scarlet petticoat. A sharp dry cachinnation appealed to his memory, and, standing on tiptoe in the crowd, with his white apron over his head, he beheld the courteous little innkeeper. And lastly, there sailed over the heads of the multitude a great broad laugh broken in the midst by two sepulchral hems; thus, "Haw, haw, haw!—hem, hem!—haw, haw, haw, haw!"

The sound proceeded from the balcony of the opposite edifice, and thither Robin turned his eyes. In front of the Gothic window stood the old citizen wrapped in a wide gown, his gray periwig exchanged for a night-cap which was thrust back from his forehead, and his silk stockings hanging about his legs. He supported himself on his polished cane in a fit of convulsive merriment, which manifested itself on his solemn old features like a funny inscription on a tombstone. Then Robin seemed to hear the voices of the barbers, of the guests of the inn, and of all who had made sport of him that night. The contagion was spreading



among the multitude, when all at once it seized upon Robin, and he sent forth a shout of laughter that echoed through the street; every man shook his sides, every man emptied his lungs, but Robin's shout was the loudest there. The cloud-spirits peeped from their silvery islands as the congregated mirth went roaring up the sky. The Man in the Moon heard the far bellow. "Oho," quoth he, "the old earth is frolicksome to-night!"

When there was a momentary calm in that tempestuous sea of sound the leader gave the sign, the procession resumed its march. On they went, like fiends that throng in mockery around some dead potentate, mighty no more, but majestic still in his agony. On they went, in counterfeited pomp, in senseless uproar, in frenzied merriment, trampling all on an old man's heart. On swept the tumult and left a silent street behind.

. . . . .

"Well, Robin, are you dreaming?" inquired the gentleman, laying his hand on the youth's shoulder.

Robin started and withdrew his arm from the stone post to which he had instinctively clung as the living stream rolled by him. His cheek was

somewhat pale, and his eye not quite as lively as in the earlier part of the evening.

“Will you be kind enough to show me the way to the ferry?” said he after a moment’s pause.

“You have, then, adopted a new subject of inquiry?” observed his companion with a smile.

“Why, yes, sir,” replied Robin, rather dryly. “Thanks to you and to my other friends, I have at last met my kinsman, and he will scarce desire to see my face again. I begin to grow weary of a town life, sir. Will you show me the way to the ferry?”

“No, my good friend Robin—not to-night, at least,” said the gentleman. “Some few days hence, if you wish it, I will speed you on your journey. Or, if you prefer to remain with us, perhaps, as you are a shrewd youth, you may rise in the world without the help of your kinsman, Major Molineux.”

THE END.







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